BUSINESS / B1

RP stocks tumble as world markets skid following fall of Shanghai bourse

WORLD / A19

Prince Charles tells hosts in Abu Dhabi to ban McDonald's

NEWS / A3

Tokyo court overturns ruling granting nationality to Japan men's foreign kids

ENTERTAINMENT/ D1

New PBB batch described as 'merry mix of neurotic, normal people'

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, March 1, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 83 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Let
Vegetarianism
Grow on You

HOW GREEN IS THE VALLEY: All decked up (and down) in lettuce, vegetarian/starlet Alicia Meyer is the poster girl of the Asia-wide media campaign launched by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals to get people to stop eating meat and go veggie. AFP

Erap barks: I've nothing to do with 'ASO jingle'

THE MAN DIDN'T DO IT. Ousted President Joseph Estrada yesterday said he had nothing to do with the derisive "ASO Jingle" that certain sectors of the opposition are using to discredit

ERAP/ A8

BAKIT NAMAN SILA NAG IDENTIFY DUN?

Pichay, Villar, Recto top media spenders

Study on TV ad spots in first 2 weeks of campaign

By Ronnel W. Domingo and Jocelyn R. Uy

THE CIRCUS IS ON TV, AND IS COSTING SENATORIAL CANDIdates lots of money.

If you regularly watch news programs, you have probably seen the political ads of Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, a senatorial candidate of the administration's Team Unity.

A study by Nielsen Media Research Philippines (NMRP) found that Pichay had spent the most (some P33 million) for TV ad spots in the first two weeks of the campaign.

The campaign period for senatorial candidates began on Feb. 13.

Reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto spent P30.29 million and P22.79 million, respectively.

The Nielsen study said GMA 7 cornered 56 percent of the money spent by politicians on TV ads; ABS-CBN 2, 42 percent, and ABC 5, 2 percent.

The heavy spending has caught the eye of the Commission on Elections, which is reminding political parties to submit their statements of expenses on time or risk being punished.

PICHAY/ A6

① **PICHAY** tops the list with P33.4M

② **VILLAR:** P30.29M

③ **RECTO:** P22.79M

Maceda blames Villar for Kiko fiasco in GO

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HOW DID THE CONFUSION START?

It was Senate President Manuel Villar who accepted former President Joseph Estrada's offer that he and Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan be included in the Genuine Opposition's senatorial slate as "guest candidates," ex-Sen. Ernesto Maceda said yesterday.

Maceda, a close Estrada ally, said Villar appeared to speak on behalf of Pangilinan when he agreed to the offer made by the former President last Feb. 10.

Villar's consent seems to be at the root of the confusion about Pangilinan's inclusion in the GO slate, despite Pangilinan's insistence that—like Villar—he will campaign as an independent candidate.

Maceda and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday ended the opposition's three-week ambivalence about Pangilinan, declaring he had been officially dropped.

"The GO slate is now officially 11 sans Kiko," campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano, flanked by Binay and Maceda, announced in a news conference at their headquarters in Mandaluyong City.

"This is a final decision," said Binay. "This is what we've been saying all along." He said

MACEDA/ A8

GO's first major out-of-town rally canceled

By Diosa Labiste
Inquirer Visayas

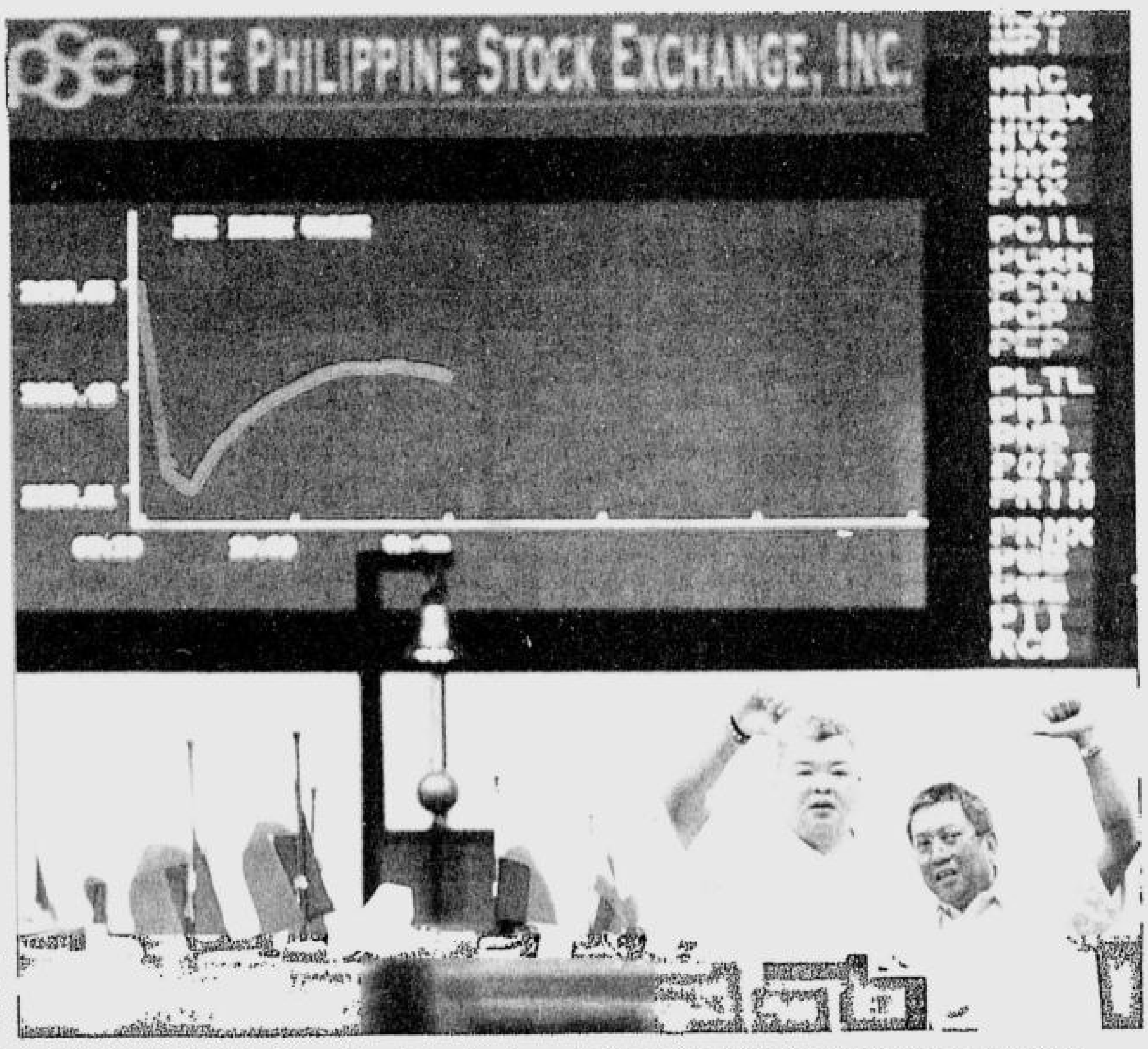
ILOILO CITY—THE FIRST MAJOR RALLY BY the Genuine Opposition's senatorial slate in Iloilo was abruptly canceled at 8 o'clock last night due to an unconfirmed threat.

Two entertainers—Inday Garutay and Tiya Pusit—were working up a crowd of about 100 attending the GO rally at the Rotary Amphitheater in front of the Iloilo Provincial Capitol building at around 7:50 p.m. when provincial administrator Manuel Mejorada went up the stage and announced that the rally has been called off because of a threat.

Mejorada later told reporters that the threat included phone calls and text messages received by unnamed close allies of Gov. Niel Tupas Sr., which warned of a "serious incident" should the rally proceed as scheduled.

Mejorada said the decision to call off the rally was reached by Senate President Franklin Drilon, Tupas and GO campaign

GO'S FIRST/ A6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JITTERY INVESTORS: Sad show of hands from traders on the floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange. Investors dumped Asian shares and emerging market bonds on Wednesday after Tuesday's sell-off in China triggered a chain reaction around the world. (*Story in Business, Page B1.*) REUTERS

GMA revamps campaign team, names Samar gov 'action' man

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS SHUFfling Team Unity's movers and shakers by tapping Eastern Samar Gov. Benjamin Evardone as the administration ticket's point man to replace veteran campaign strategist Reli German.

German, the architect of the presidential campaigns of both Ms Arroyo and her ousted predecessor, Joseph Estrada, yesterday confirmed that Evardone would take over the media and logistics aspect of Team Unity's sorties as it enters the second leg of the 90-day campaign period.

But he will retain his title as campaign manager, he said.

Asked to describe his trimmed responsibilities, German said he would basically be the "brains" of the campaign and Evardone, the action man.

Another fresh face joining Team Unity is Antonio "Tonypet" Albano, who has been designated deputy of the group's spokesperson, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano.

Albano, a graduate of the University of Cal-

GMA REVAMPS/ A6

Gov't receives ₱25B for PLDT shares

By Daxim L. Lucas, Michelle Remo and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY COMPLETED THE CONtroversial sale of its indirect stake in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) to the local unit of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. controlled by Indonesia's Salim family.

The signing ceremony for the deal between Metro Pacific Asset Holdings and the Department of Finance pushed through despite a last-ditch attempt by its critics to stop the P25.2-billion sale.

"We are delighted to finally close this transaction which is the third-biggest privatization done by the Philippine government after Petron and Fort Bonifacio," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said.

On Wednesday morning, lawyer and accountant Wilson Gamboa filed a petition with the Supreme Court seek-

GOV'T/ A4

Hope-James-Kris row morphs into battle of the bulge

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

FROM A BATTLE OF PREGNANT WOMEN, the Hope-James-Kris love triangle is turning into a battle of the bulge of a business sort.

In the latest twist in this real-life *telenovela*, Dr. Vicki Belo, the owner of the cosmetic surgery chain where Kris Aquino's husband James Yap reportedly had a 10-month sexual dalliance with Hope Centeno, one of the clinic's receptionists, said the scandal may have been the offshoot of a conflict between her and a disgruntled employee.

According to Belo, this former employee is now working with a rival clinic also specializing in liposuction and other body shaping procedures to help men and women beat the bulge.

Belo, who said that she had come out in the open because her clinic had been portrayed as a "whorehouse," said she herself was the "in-

HOPE/ A6

PCGG admits Marcoses, cronies have upper hand

By Jerry E. Esplanada

WIELDING THEIR "POWER AND unlimited resources," the Marcoses and their cronies have successfully blocked the government's 21-year efforts to recover their ill-gotten wealth, officials of the Presidential Commission on Good Government said yesterday.

"The government machineries have proven effete," said PCGG Commissioner Tereso Javier.

PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio acknowledged during a news conference that "for the moment, *nahihirapan* (it is difficult)."

"I am not saying we cannot do it, but it will take time. We are trying our best to achieve our mandate, our task," Sabio said.

Commissioners Narciso Nario and Nicasio Conti said they remained optimistic and determined in recovering more stolen assets accumulated by the late President Ferdinand Marcos, his immediate family, relatives and close associates.

The PCGG expects to recover an additional P110 billion in ill-gotten wealth during the remainder of President Macapagal-Arroyo's term, includ-

PCGG/ A4

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Palace rejects US offer on killings

By Michael Lim Ubac and Alcuin Papa

IN A VEILED REBUFF OF THE UNITED STATES' offer of help, Malacañang said yesterday that any international aid with respect to extrajudicial killings would have to be carefully studied first by the administration.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters that the help being offered by the US was not yet needed at this point.

"At the proper time you will know when such assistance will be sought by the Philippine government and what assistance may be asked," he added.

Ermita said that should the government decide to accept the US help, it would be in the form of "capability building," or "technical assistance such as in forensics" which the country does not have an expertise in.

He said any assistance extended to the government to put a stop to the killings was a welcome move, especially if it's coming from "a longtime friend" of the Philippines.

A formal letter, if the help will be needed at all, will be issued through the Department of Foreign Affairs, he said.

On Sunday, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney offered her government's help to stop the unresolved extrajudicial killings which has caused embarrassment to the Arroyo administration worldwide.

UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston said the military was responsible for some of the killings. But the military insisted some of the killings were part of a purge in the communist movement.

The top US envoy said the US was concerned over the killings of leftist activists, journalists and religious officials since 2001, many of whom remain unresolved. "Let's ... make every effort to indeed investigate, prosecute those responsible, exonerate the innocent," said Kenney.

In contrast to Malacañang stance, the Task Force Usig of the Philippine National Police said yesterday it has accepted the help offered by the US government to solve the cases of slain militants and journalists.

In a press conference, Task Force Usig head Chief Supt. Geary Barias said a committee would be formed to study "the possible areas of cooperation and assistance where the offer of the US government will fit in."

He said they hope to get help on ballistics, fingerprinting and computer knowledge.

Barias said his staff was due to meet Scott Mariel and Scott Pelart of the US Embassy. "We are hoping that we can discuss with them the details of the proposal for technical assistance by their government," he said.

"Initially, we are looking at further training to enhance the capability of our investigators, and acquisition of equipment to upgrade our existing forensic and investigative capability," Barias said.

Barias explained that the PNP's Automated Fingerprinting Identification System (AFIS) can only hold a database of one million fingerprints.

Task Force Usig was formed to investigate the killings of militants and journalists on orders of President Arroyo.

A Church-based group yesterday dared the US government to help stop the extra-judicial killings by "suspending" all forms of support to the military.

In a statement, the Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR) accused US Embassy officials of merely "posturing" on the issue of the killings.

The PCPR said the US government should stop "advising, funding, and giving all forms of support to the military. *With a report from Nikko Dizon*

GMA to propose Epira amendment

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has ordered Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla to ask Congress to amend the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), the law that deregulated the power industry.

She said the government would like Congress to amend the Epira's rules on power rates adjustments so that the 30-day notice to allow for public hearings and other requirements would be made to apply only to increases, and not to rate cuts.

The President, who spoke at a roundtable discussion yesterday on the recently announced power rate reduction, said that with a change in the procedures there would be an automatic adjustment of power rates, especially if it concerned price reduction. (Related story on Page A16).

According to Lotilla, however, there may be no need to actually amend the law itself.

"We have asked the Joint Congressional Power Commission to allow us to revise the implementing rules and regulations of the Epira so that we can have a faster adjustment in the rates, to be flexible," he said.

The Joint Congressional Power Commission, which includes representatives from both chambers of Congress, sets the guidelines and overall framework to monitor and ensure the proper implementation of the Epira.

The Energy Regulatory Commission announced the other day that it had ordered the National Power Corp., the state power generator, to reduce its rates by 4.3 centavos in Luzon, 31.5 centavos in the Visayas and 0.45 in Mindanao because of declining generation costs.

Lotilla also announced yesterday that the price of LPG could go down further next month because of the reduced contract price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in Singapore.

He said the price of LPG per metric ton had decreased from $P526 last month to $P506 this month, which effectively means a P1 decrease per kilogram of LPG.

But the reduction can only be implemented starting next month, he said. *Michael Lim Ubac*

GO accepts debate challenge

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Nikko Dizon

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION YESTERDAY ACcepted the challenge of the administration's Team Unity to a debate on the economy, but wants the debate held in the open at the Plaza Miranda in Manila.

"We respond to Secretary (Joey) Salceda's challenge and we dare Team-GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) to debate with us at the Plaza Miranda," GO campaign spokesman Adel Tamano said yesterday.

The planned debate among the senatorial candidates was welcomed yesterday by Catholic bishops, saying this would give the electorate a chance to get to know who they would be voting for.

"*Ang kailangan ay ipahayag at ipaliwanag nang mga partido ang kani-kanilang plataporma ng gobyerno* (What is important is for the various political parties to announce and explain their respective platforms)," Iloilo Archbishop Angel Lagdameo told reporters in a text message. He is also the president of the influential Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio Ledesma said a debate was "important" to allow those seeking elective positions to explain their platforms and for voters to be "made aware" of the candidates' "promises."

Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iniguez said the debate should be "well-motivated." "That is, to help us know them (candidates) more," he said.

Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, however, was a bit more wary of such debates.

"The better debater does not necessarily champion the truth," said Cruz, a staunch government critic.

Cruz believed that most voters would "rather watch telenovelas," saying a debate is simply comprised of "words and more words which the poor, the hungry, and the sick have no use for."

On Tuesday, Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda challenged the opposition to a debate after GO came out with full-page ads in several dailies claiming the economy performed better during the term of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

DAR assures Negros farmers of land

By TJ Burgonio and Carla P. Gomez,
Inquirer Visayas

AFTER 16 FARMERS ON A HUNGER STRIKE landed in the hospital, Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman announced yesterday that he would finally install the protesting land reform beneficiaries in a sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental next week.

The farmers camped outside the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City since last week vowed to go ahead with their hunger strike until the Secretary brings them to the 144-ha land in La Castellana's Hacienda Velez-Malaga which was awarded to them in 2002.

Pangandaman said he had gotten assurance from field officials that there was "no legal impediment" for the department to take away the property from hacienda owner Roberto Cuenca, and distribute this to the farmer-beneficiaries.

"Although there are still pending cases, these do not pose any problem," he said in a statement.

The Secretary did not set a specific day next week for the installation of the farmers. Neither did he explain how the government finally convinced the landowner to allow the farmers to occupy their land.

The announcement comes on the eighth day of the protest fast. Fifteen of the 22 hunger strikers that were brought to the East Avenue Medical Center after losing consciousness and becoming dizzy have returned to the strike camp. Another was taken to the hospital before dawn Wednesday.

BACK ON HUNGER STRIKE, farmers return to the DAR building from the hospital. JOAN BONDOC

No cell phones, gadgets at US Embassy

By Cynthia D. Balana

MOBILE PHONES AND OTHER electronic items are no longer allowed in the consular section of the United States Embassy in Manila effective today.

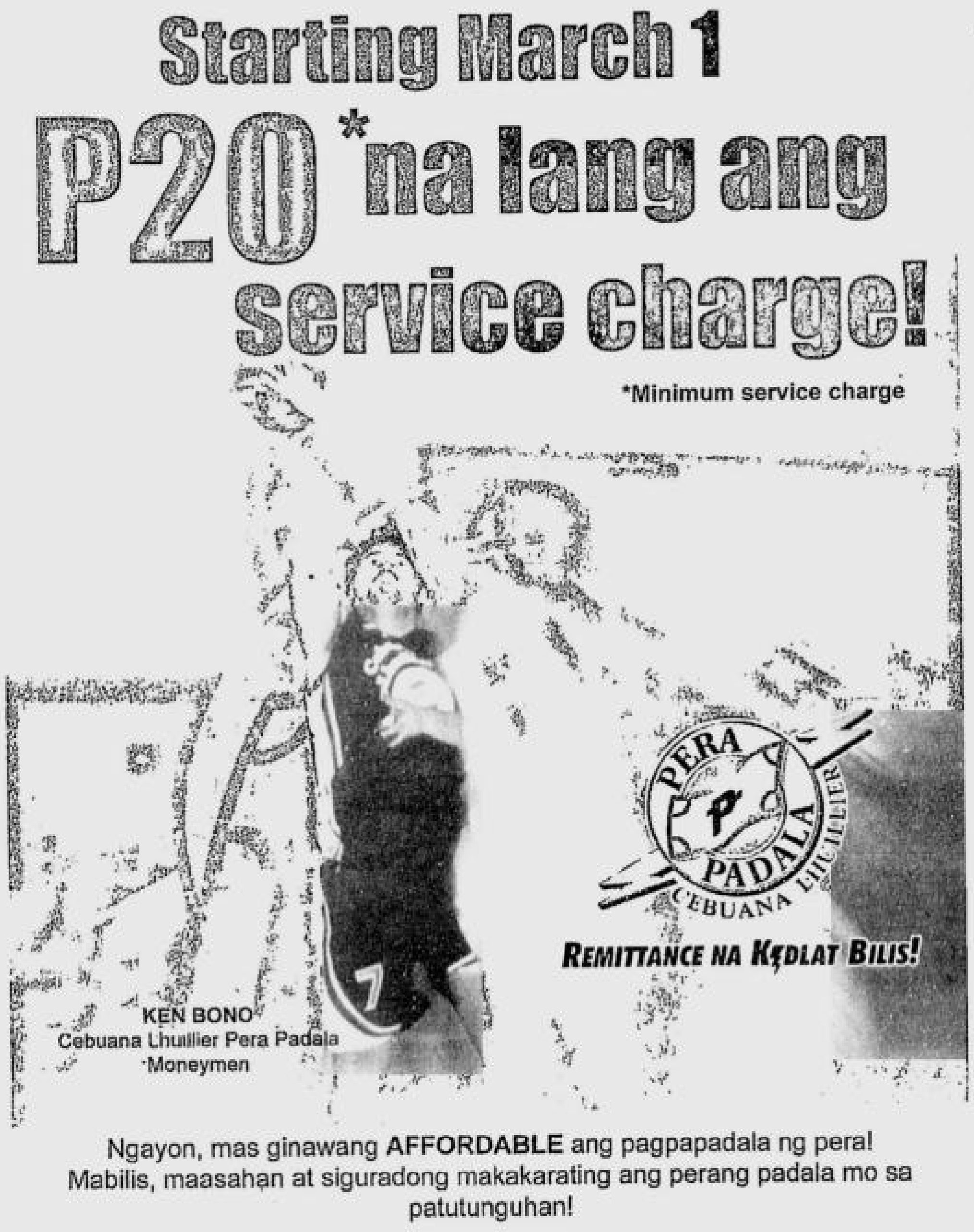
The US Embassy said in a statement that the prohibition, which applies to all visa applicants and employees, was intended for their security and safety.

This policy includes PDAs, laptops, and MP3 music players.

A storage facility for cell phones and electronic devices will be set up at the embassy. Applicants for both non-immigrant and immigrant visas should leave their electronic equipment in a safe location off embassy grounds during their appointments.

According to the embassy, this new policy will also help speed applicant processing to their interview appointments.

"Applicants should be aware that if they miss a visa interview appointment; they will have to reschedule through normal procedures. We regret any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate the cooperation of all non-immigrant and immigrant visa applicants," it said.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Court denies Filipino kids' bid for Japan citizenship

TOKYO—A COURT ON TUESDAY overturned a landmark ruling that gave Japanese nationality to the children of unmarried Japanese men and foreign women.

Nine children of Filipina mothers had been denied Japanese nationality because their Japanese fathers—who were married to other women—acknowledged them only after they were born.

Under Japanese law, the father has to confirm the child as his before an out-of-wedlock birth.

The Tokyo High Court struck down a lower court ruling, which said the law was unconstitutional discrimination against children on the basis of their parents' marital status.

Presiding judge Hidetoshi Somiya said illegitimate passport seekers could abuse the law if fathers gave nationality to children already born out of wedlock.

"If a child born out of wedlock is allowed to have nationality solely through the father's recognition and documents, it would create a way to obtain nationality based on an expanded interpretation of the law," he said.

Last year's ruling at the Tokyo District Court marked the first time that illegitimate children in Japan had won in a class-action suit.

There are believed to be hundreds of illegitimate children in Japan, which has a major industry of foreign entertainers from the Philippines and elsewhere.

"Not only the nine children, but also many other children have been deprived of Japanese nationality," said Hironori Kondo, a lawyer for the plaintiffs. *AFP*

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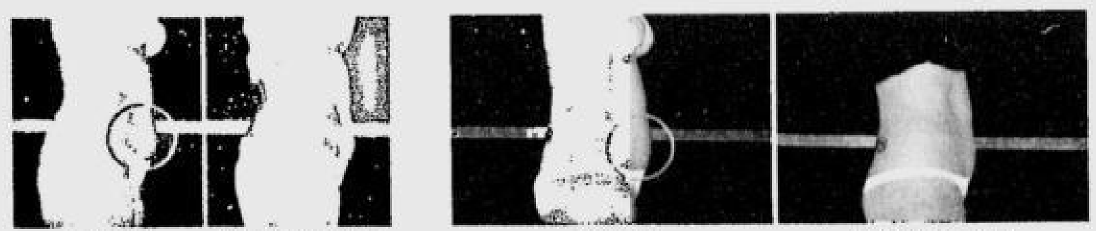

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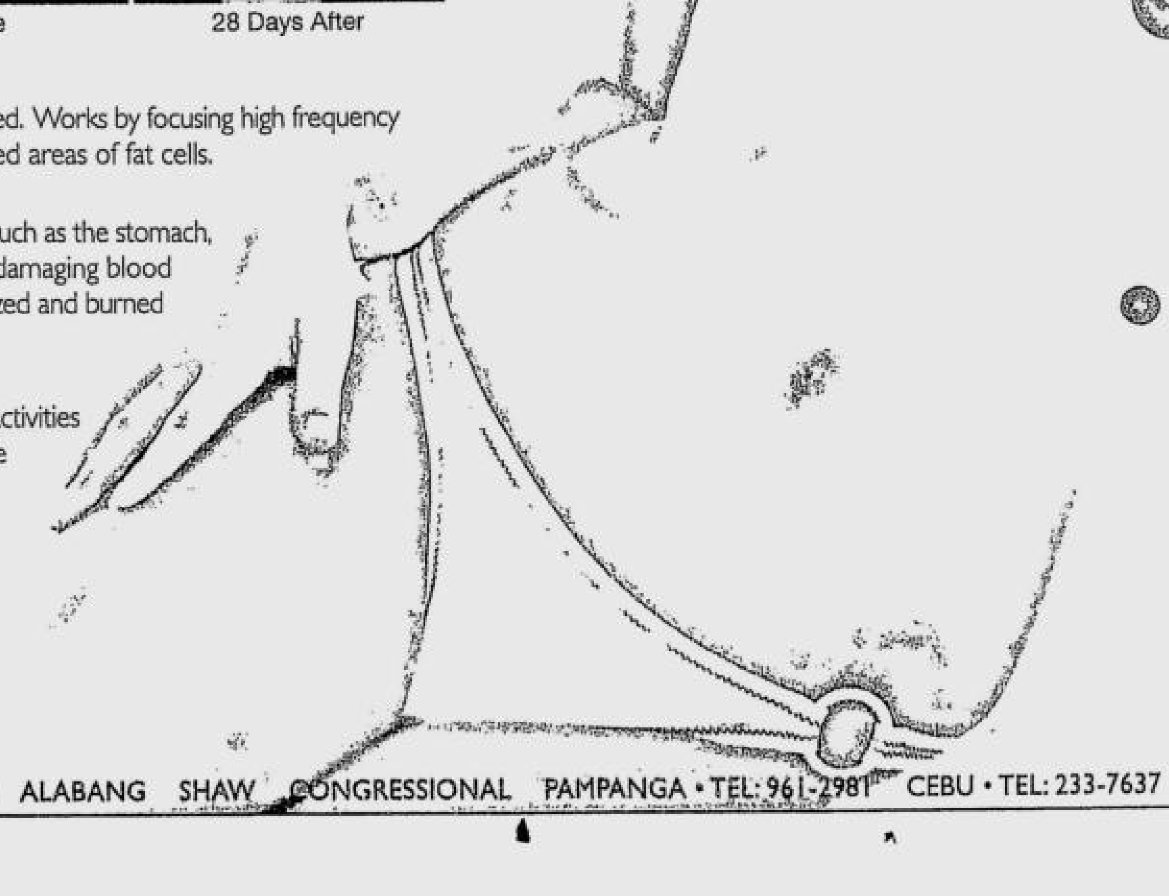

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marie france

PCGG admits Marcoses, cronies have upper hand

From page A1

ing at least P60 billion in coconut levy funds "hopefully by June this year or not later this year."

"We have met with coconut farmers groups," said Sabio. He said the commission would meet next with the group of ex-Marcos associate Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

The commission's game plan also calls for the privatization of some P46.7 billion worth of surrendered and recovered assets which include real estate and shares of stocks in various corporations.

Recoveries

The PCGG, created on Feb. 28, 1986, under Executive Order No. 1 by President Corazon Aquino, has so far turned over a total of P61,878,943,474.23 to the National Treasury.

Of this amount, about P35.8 billion was turned over by the Arroyo administration, P20.9 billion by the Ramos administration, P4.03 billion by the Aquino administration, and a low P1.08 billion by the Estrada administration.

As of June 30, 2006, the PCGG had forwarded P57.4 billion to the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), as required by law.

The commission also handed over some 500,000 hectares of sequestered real estate to CARP.

More than 500 criminal and civil cases stemming from the plunder committed in the last three decades were filed by the commission. However, not a single respondent has been put to jail.

"Those affected represent a great number of the most powerful personalities during the Marcos administration that they wielded strong influence in almost all sectors of society: political, economic, religious, media, the academe, professionals and a considerable number of people beholden to these powerful groups," Javier said.

Battered

"Slowly but surely, they have successfully tapped these groups and with deliberate speed and constancy relentlessly battered the PCGG," he said.

Case respondents have "hired the best lawyers who were paid and rewarded with generous amounts never dreamed of by government lawyers while the latter worked hard motivated only by their patriotism."

"These hired lawyers have thrown all possible legal remedies along the way, unnecessarily prolonging the conclusion of these cases," Javier said, proving "disastrous" to the government. Javier pointed out "witnesses to the prosecution become a problem and documentary evidences become harder to procure and worse, they disappear altogether."

"It doesn't help at all that the court and court processes grind ever so slowly as the rules allow," he said. "Delays caused by this have always been blamed on the PCGG," Javier said.

THE PCGG REPORTS on its hits and misses the past two decades and why during a press conference conducted by Chair Camilo Sabio, Commissioners Narciso Nario and Tereso Javier. JOAN BONDOC

Back channeling

Such delays have prompted the PCGG to resort to what Nario called "back channeling," where government lawyers go out of their way and appeal to various courts for the immediate resolution of ill-gotten wealth cases.

"In addition to that, our lawyers have also filed resolutions for the speedy disposition of those cases," Nario said.

According to Javier, the commission "suffers a hiatus every change of its composition which takes place so often as there is no continuity in policies and initiatives undertaken, and in most instances, they are changed and worse, actions and decisions made by the previous commissions questioned and rejected."

Yesterday, Sabio opened the news conference by hitting back at former Senate President Jovito Salonga, also the first PCGG chair and one of the agency's staunchest critics.

Sabio cited a recent report by this paper which quoted Salonga as saying the present set of PCGG officials had exceeded their mandate.

Salonga had observed the likes of Sabio and Commissioner Ricardo Abcede "took advantage of their position and became directors of sequestered firms, even chairmen, in violation of the law that I authored, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Government Officials and Employees (otherwise known as Republic Act 6713)."

This is punishable by imprisonment due to conflict of interest, Salonga said.

Gross irresponsibility

According to Sabio, "if (Salonga) had been quoted correctly, then he is guilty of gross irresponsibility. His accusation against me is utterly devoid of factual and legal basis. He has maligned me without any justification."

The President had earlier named Sabio chair of the state-sequestered CHF Oil Mills Group and director of 14 CHF holding companies and the Independent Realty Corp. or IRC.

But Sabio clarified he had "not received any allowance or any compensation" from these firms.

Salonga has told this reporter the body needs "incorruptible" officials like the late chairs Ramon Diaz and Haydee Yorac, stopping short of saying the current set of PCGG officials was corrupt.

Dancing with Imelda

Salonga added, "I need not say more. It was decided by the Supreme Court that they should answer questions hurled by the Senate. Abcede, as you know, was fraternizing and dancing with former first lady Imelda Marcos."

Sabio referred to PCGG records which supposedly show that during Yorac's incumbency, she "had caused the installation of several commissioners as directors in more than 20 sequestered firms."

He said they included Ruben Carranza (IRC, IBC-13, Piedras Petroleum Corp., United Coconut Planters Bank, United Coconut Planters Assurance Corp., UCPB Leasing and Finance Corp., Grannexport Corp., ACS Investors Inc., Rock Steel Resources Inc., Iligan Bay Express Corp., and Minola Corp., among others); Victoria Avena (IRC, Southern Luzon Coconut Oil Mills and United Coconut Planters Realty Corp.); Jorge Sarmiento (United Coconut Chemicals Inc.); William Dichoso (UCPB Leasing and Finance Corp., UCPB Properties Inc. and UCPB Securities Inc.).

Employers Confederation of the Philippines

nicc NIPPON KEIDANREN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION CENTER TOKYO, JAPAN

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- Occupational Safety And Health Management Systems: Experiences in Japan and Asia
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Day 2 - March 8
- Low-Cost Ways of Improving Safety and Productivity in Materials Handling
- Low-Cost Ways of Improving Safety and Productivity Workstation Design
- Occupational Safety and Health Trends in the Philippines
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER JOB Market

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A challenge to all mayoralty candidates in the Metropolitan Manila

The signs of decay, corruption and incompetence in the metropolis have become increasingly pervasive; you see the physical and psychological deterioration everywhere; officials who are not governing; the chronic stalemate in decision-making because no one clears the gridlocks of conflicting issues; the divisions and bureaus functioning as fiefdoms because of lack of accountability; and the absence of a directing hand in the affairs of local executive governance.

This explains the absence of transparency of candidates running for local executive positions; their propensity to use guns, goons, gold; their usual empty promises; and the failure of voters to scrutinize them if they are really fit to govern.

In this regard, as part of its public service, **The Philippine Council of Management (PHILCOMAN)**, a federation of professional and technological societies, management development institutions, academe, business enterprises, and professional managers and administrators in private and public sectors dedicated to the development and improvement of existing management practices in all aspects of Philippine society, challenges all mayoralty candidates in the metropolis beginning with Manila, Quezon City, Pasig, Makati City and Mandaluyong to submit themselves to public scrutiny to determine their fitness to govern the affairs of their respective cities and municipalities based on the following criteria:

1. Name of the candidate
2. Educational background
3. Work experiences, past and present
4. Platform, including strategy and timetable for implementation
5. Specific plans for education, health, environment, unemployment, and peace and order

Candidates must submit by fax or by any electronic means his/her answer based on the above criteria, maximum of six pages, on or before March 15, 2007, at the Philcoman offices, 1061 Metropolitan Ave., San Antonio Village, Makati City, Telefax No. 8962333/ 8962351 or email at **philcoman@gmail.com**.

A panel of management and public administration experts will examine the submission of the candidates and their findings will be published in all major newspapers before or after March 29, 2007 to guide voters in the forthcoming local election.

Sgd. Leni Q. Delicana
Head, Philcoman Secretariat

ADVT

Gov't receives P25B for PLDT shares

From page A1

ing to stop the transaction, saying that it violates the "spirit and intent" of the 1987 Constitution capping foreign ownership in a public utility at 40 percent.

At the same time, PLDT chair and First Pacific managing director Manuel V. Pangilinan dared the INQUIRER to identify the main critic of the deal, complaining that he was being treated unfairly for his role in the transaction.

"You know who it is!" he said, raising his voice before the assembled members of the press and his staff. "Why don't you write about it?"

Both PLDT and government officials, all declining to be named, believe that moves to derail the transaction are being spearheaded by former PLDT chair Antonio "Tony Boy" O. Cojuangco.

"*Duwag ka lang* (You're a coward)!" he said, while pointing his finger at an INQUIRER reporter, before walking off in a huff.

Pangilinan lost his cool when asked whether the opponents of the deal had made him aware of their demands or whether these were already communicated to him. "That's unfair," he said. "Remember: I'm the easy target."

Cojuangco camp

Members of the Cojuangco camp—also declining to be named—have denied the allegations, although they admitted that the businessman was opposed to the government move to sell its 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC) to Salim-owned First Pacific.

Gamboa acknowledged that his group was behind the paid newspaper ad assailing the transaction, but denied that he was acting on behalf of Cojuancgo.

The PTIC shares were part of the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses. The Supreme Court ruled on Jan. 21, 2006 that the government was the rightful owner of 111,415 shares of PTIC registered under the name of Prime Holdings Inc.

Additional stake in PLDT

The sale of the shares of PTIC, which owns a stake in PLDT, translates to an additional 6.4-percent stake for the Hong Kong-based conglomerate in the telecommunications giant.

In his petition to the Supreme Court, Gamboa pointed out that Section 11, Article XII of the 1987 Constitution states that foreigners can only own 40 percent of a public utility.

Before the sale, First Pacific already held 30.7 percent of PLDT shares, according to Gamboa. He said this would go up to 37 percent once the sale was completed.

The problem is Japan-based NTT DoCoMo, the second-biggest foreign investor in PLDT, owns nearly 14 percent of the shares.

The sale will leave the two biggest foreign investors owning nearly 51 percent of PLDT's common stocks, way beyond the 40-percent constitutional limit, Gamboa said.

In addition, three other foreign companies own shares in PLDT. Citing a stock exchange website in the United States, Gamboa said the sale would mean at least 81.47 percent of PLDT common equity being owned by foreign companies.

Lower than cap

PLDT maintains that its foreign equity level is much lower than the statutory cap.

"As can be gleaned from the company's Foreign Ownership Monitoring Report filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on Feb. 6, 2007, the foreign ownership of PLDT's total outstanding capital stock was only 13.8 percent as of Jan. 31, 2007," the company said in a statement to the local bourse.

PANGILINAN to PDI reporter: Identify the main critic of the deal. You know who he is. You're a coward. REUTERS

This was affirmed by the SEC, which said that, as of end-September 2006, Filipinos owned 86.32 percent of PLDT's P9.39-billion aggregate authorized capital stock.

Asked to respond to PLDT and SEC statements, Gamboa said the number of stocks considered for the 60:40 rule should be only common stocks, which come with voting rights, and should not include preferred shares, which do not entitle holders to vote on company affairs.

Other respondents

Apart from Pangilinan, named respondents in Gamboa's petition were Teves in his capacity as Privatization Council chair, First Pacific chair Anthoni Salim, PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno, Finance Undersecretary John Sevilla, Commissioner Ricardo Abcede of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, Securities and Exchange Commission chair Fe Barin, and Philippine Stock Exchange president Francis Lim.

Echoing the statement of PLDT officials, Teves said the sale did not violate any constitutional provisions and it was "above board."

"Everything was done in proper order and [the government] worked through this carefully," he said during the briefing. "We would not have done this (sale) if there was something not in order."

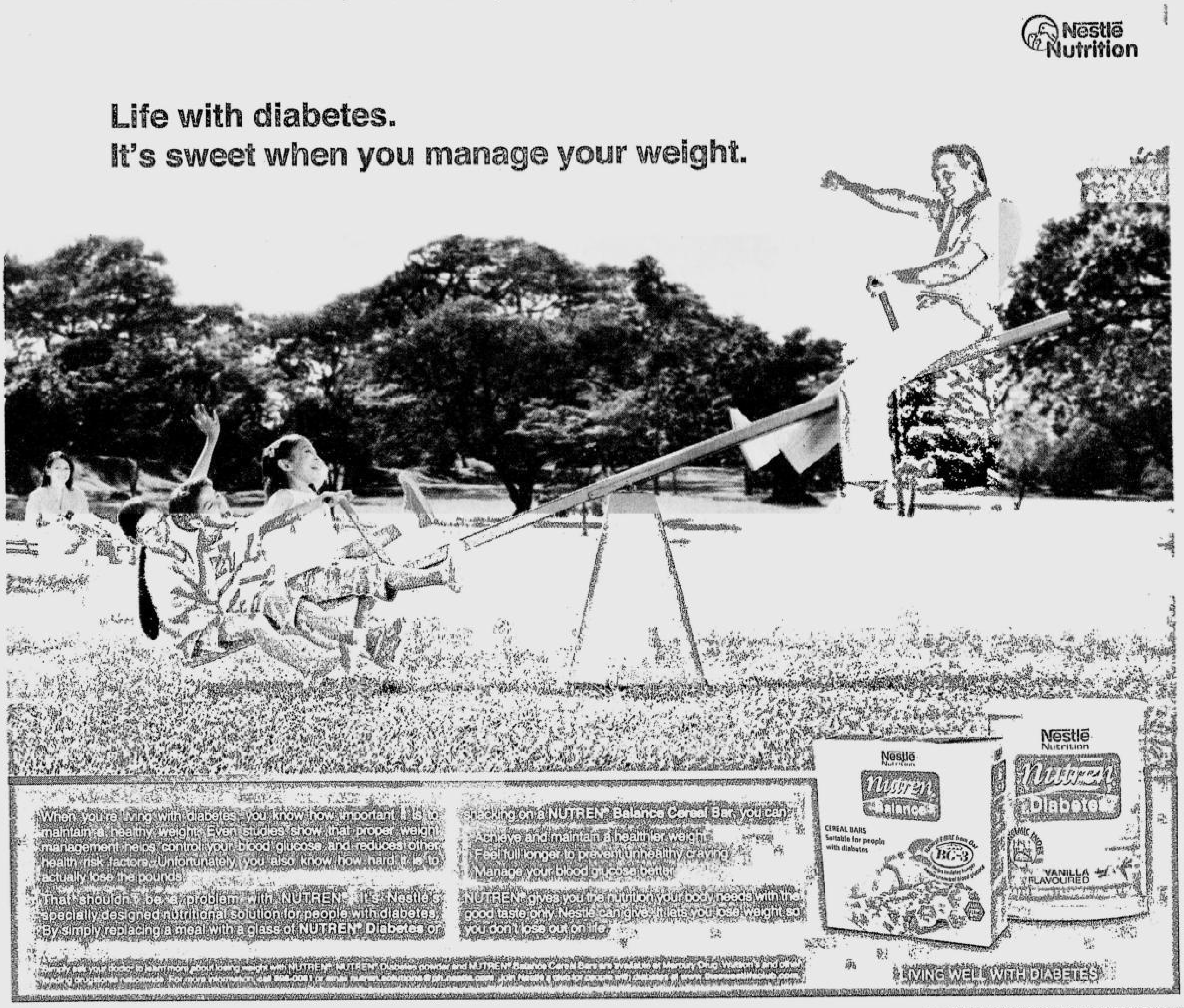
Gov't coffers boosted

The sale put the government close to hitting its target of generating P27 billion worth of revenues from privatization for 2007, and boosted its chances of meeting the goal of keeping the budget deficit at P63 billion or below.

The government expects to sell the old Iloilo airport and small real estate assets to meet the full-year target on privatization revenues.

The finance chief said proceeds of the sale would help fund the government's expenditure programs related to infrastructure development and social services.

Teves also said the sale would support the government's intention of pump-priming the economy after it was restrained from doing so last year because of a tight budget. *With a report from Riza Olchondra*



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STILL FRIENDS: The Wednesday Group proves that their friendship is beyond politics as they get together to dine at the Mall of Asia despite their current affiliations with opposite political parties. So, let the good times roll. From left, Senators Ralph Recto, Kiko Pangilinan, Manny Villar, Joker Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro. RODEL ROTONI

GO ACCEPTS CHALLENGE: Former Ambassador Ernesto Maceda, GO spokesperson lawyer Adel Tamano and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay hold a press conference in Mandaluyong City, Wednesday to accept the challenge of Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda to a debate on the real state of the economy and to announce the dropping of Pangilinan from the opposition Senate slate. JOAN BONDOC

Gay party-list group Ladlad out of the race

By Jerome Aning

ANG LADLAD, A GROUP OF LESbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT), has been disallowed from participating in the party-list elections in May because of its purported failure to prove nationwide membership.

In a three-page ruling issued on Tuesday, the Commission on Elections' second division dismissed Ang Ladlad's application for accreditation "for lack of merit."

The division chaired by Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. said that contrary to Ang Ladlad's claim "that its membership is national in scope, reports from our field offices reveal that it doesn't exist in most regions of the country."

The division cited Section 6 of Republic Act No. 7941 (the Party-List System Act of 1995), which provides that an applicant may be denied accreditation for making an "untruthful statement" in its petition.

Its other members, Commissioners Rene Sarmiento and Nicodemo Ferrer, also voted to reject Ang Ladlad's petition.

Ang Ladlad filed its petition for accreditation on Sept. 15, 2006.

Danton Remoto, its president and founder, went to the Comelec office yesterday afternoon to get a copy of the decision. He said he would confer with the group's lawyers to discuss their next move, which included the filing of a motion for reconsideration.

Under Comelec rules of procedure, any motion for reconsideration of a division's ruling must be heard by the commission en banc, meaning all commissioners sitting as one body.

'Where did fees go?'

Remoto, a professor at the Ateneo de Manila University, expressed disappointment at the division's ruling.

"I ask, did they go to the houses of our members to check? We paid the required P3,050 as filing and research fees. Where did these go?" he told reporters.

If the group's motion for reconsideration is denied, it will take the case all the way to the Supreme Court, he said.

"Let's be fair and square in the fight and to allow real marginal groups, not relatives of people in the Comelec, to run for public office," Remoto told reporters.

"If not, we will have a party-list system that will become a refuge of the mediocre and obscure, destroying its true spirit," he added.

In a message e-mailed to Ang Ladlad members, Remoto said: "This is the way it is; our hands are clean. We took no bribes and gave none. In the end, [we will be able to participate in the elections] if not in 2007, then in 2010. I know we will be vindicated, and we will win.

"Other party-list groups fabricate their membership [but] in our case, our membership is real."

Equal rights for LGBT

Ang Ladlad planned to seek seats in the House of Representatives on the platform of equal rights for and end to discrimination of members of the LGBT community.

Concerned that the Comelec was taking a long time to decide on their accreditation to take part in the party-list elections, Ang Ladlad officials had decided to field Remoto in the senatorial race instead.

Remoto filed his certificate of candidacy last Feb. 10 as an independent candidate.

He had begun campaigning to solicit the votes of the members and supporters of the LGBT community.

But he said yesterday that he was considering junking his senatorial candidacy for the meantime and instead seek to represent Quezon City's third district in the House.

Constituency

Comelec education and information department chief James Arthur Jimenez said Ang Ladlad's petition was rejected simply because it had failed to comply with all the legal requirements.

"The question of constituency is very important especially if you declare your party or organization as a national party with national membership," he said.

But Jimenez clarified that in reaching its decision, the Comelec had never doubted Ang Ladlad's sincerity in pushing the LGBT agenda if elected to Congress.

153 applicants

Ang Ladlad is one of 153 groups that applied to participate for the first time in the party-list elections in May.

Only 37 have so far been accredited by the Comelec. Those not yet accredited were allowed to campaign for the meantime until the agency rules on their petitions.

Two other parties denied accreditation for not being nationwide in scope, as they had claimed in their petitions, were the MARE Foundation Inc. headed by Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada, and the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice.

Of the 77 party-list groups able to run in the 2004 elections, the Comelec delisted 33 for failing to win or participate in two previous consecutive elections.

Many of the delisted groups and those who failed to be accredited have filed motions for reconsideration before the Comelec.

The list of incumbent party-list groups and new party-list groups that were accredited may be viewed at the EID website, http://www.bagongbotante.com.

Pichay, Villar, Recto top media spenders

From page A1

Submitting financial statements seven days after every public meeting and rally to an election officer is an obligation that has been neglected by candidates, Comelec Commissioner Rene Sarmiento said yesterday.

He reminded the candidates to submit their individual financial statements 30 days after the May 14 elections so that the agency could check against overspending.

Fair Election Act

The Fair Election Act stipulates that candidates officially nominated by political parties and officially recognized by the Comelec can spend P3 for every registered voter. A political party is allowed to spend P5 for every voter.

Off-hand, Sarmiento said the registered voters this election year could be between 43 million and 45 million.

Failure to comply with the rules—if the Comelec were to strictly follow Resolution No. 7767 [Fair Election Act]—is an offense punishable by up to six years imprisonment, disqualification from holding public office or the cancellation of a candidate's right to vote.

NMRP executive director Jay G. Bautista said the Nielsen study conducted from Feb. 13 to Feb. 25 showed that Pichay had so far shelled out P33.4 million for a total of 46 minutes on TV.

Villar, Recto more air time

Villar and Recto were ahead of Pichay in terms of the total minutes their ads were aired. Villar's ads were aired for 67 minutes and Recto's, 47 minutes.

Political TV ads that ran in the first two weeks of the campaign cost a total of P224 million in air time, according to Nielsen.

This means that the top three spenders—Pichay, Villar and Recto—accounted for 15, 14 and 10 percent of the total.

Nielsen said the political ads represented 6 percent of the P3.68 billion in total TV ad spending for the period.

"Spending in the early part of the campaign is usually the least in amount," Bautista said. "Money floods in the latter part, when Election Day is very near."

Bautista said that if spending in the first two weeks of the campaign were of any indication, candidates will be spending more this year compared with the past two elections.

GMA 7 gets lion's share

"ABS-CBN previously got the biggest share, but advertisers are switching to GMA because its shows are getting higher viewership," Bautista said.

News programs attracted more placements than in previous elections, but drama and soap operas, sports, and public affairs remained attractive to advertisers.

The top 10 TV programs based on political ads placement were 24 Oras (GMA 7), TV Patrol World (ABS-CBN 2), Eat Bulaga (7) and Kapamilya Deal or No Deal (2), Asian Treasures (7), Wowowee (2), Maging Sino Ka Man (2), Bakekang (7), Maria Flordeluna (2), Super Twins (7), Sana Maulit Muli (2) and Magandang Umaga Pilipinas (2).

Total media spending

Bautista said political ad spending on TV this year was expected to increase but would remain in the single-digit range compared with the total advertising spending.

"The numbers show that, as in the elections of 2004 and 2001, political ads on TV remain a minimal part of total media spending," Bautista said.

He noted that political ads in the 2004 election campaign accounted for 5 percent of some P2 trillion spent in the first five months of that year.

Drastic action

"In 2001, political ads were only 3 percent of the total," he said.

The Comelec would first give the political parties a warning to submit their expenses before taking "drastic actions," Sarmiento said.

If he were to take action on the matter, Sarmiento said he would strictly apply the sanctions on an erring candidate.

"They are aspiring to be lawmakers who will draft laws for us to follow," he said. "They have also signed their certificates of candidacy, meaning that they have agreed to obey the laws of the land," he said.

The Genuine Opposition slate, which staged a proclamation rally at the Plaza Miranda on Saturday, has yet to submit its financial statement to the Comelec.

Sarmiento said he had yet to check with local election officers whether the administration's Team Unity—which held campaign sorties in Cebu on Feb. 17; Davao on Feb. 18 and Pampanga on Feb. 20—had complied with the policy.

Drug testing

He also admonished the 80 senatorial aspirants to comply with the mandatory drug testing on or before March 29.

"Or else we will not give due course to their certificates of candidacy," he said.

Only about seven candidates have submitted their drug test certificates to the Comelec.

GMA revamps campaign team . . .

From page A1

ifornia at Los Angeles, is currently the head executive assistant of his father, Energy Regulatory Commission chair Rudy Albano.

Can't say no

Evardone was tightlipped about his new appointment, saying only in a phone interview that it was "difficult to say no to the President."

A former journalist, Evardone has served as the spokesperson of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines and the mouthpiece for the President's pet advocacy—Charter change.

There has been talk that some Team Unity members were generally dissatisfied with the handling of its rallies and media events.

But German just shrugged this off, saying: "I'm with them all the time and I haven't heard of any complaint from any one of them. Maybe you should ask them yourself."

German's deputy, Ike Gutierrez, did not reply to questions from the INQUIRER.

A source from Team Unity, who asked not to be named because of the sensitive nature of the subject, said the President was keen on tapping Evardone's deep and broad links with local government units—the administration's trump card against the opposition.

Efficient field general

With the campaign moving into a higher gear, Evardone's background makes him a more efficient field general in deploying the administration's troops and resources, the source said.

Team Unity candidates claim that governors and mayors were willingly spending their own money just to host the contenders in their respective locales.

The President's decision to revamp Team Unity's campaign team comes on the heels of the Genuine Opposition's supposed plan to replace its campaign manager, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, with his half-brother, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, before the end of this month.

Both Estrada and JV have denied this, but Jinggoy said he had yet to decide on the matter.

JV is expected to focus on his reelection campaign. GO is said to be hoping to ride on Jinggoy's enduring ties with local government officials for the rest of the campaign period, and negate part of the administration's advantage in the local government network.

GO's first major out-of-town rally canceled

From page A1

manager JV Ejercito.

He said Drilon, Tupas and Ejercito believed that whether or not there was truth to the threat, they could not afford to take a risk, particularly since the political heat generated by the move to dismiss Tupas from office and the subsequent widely criticized siege of the Capitol in January have yet to die down.

"Safety is important and we have to take the road of caution ... They did that before; who then would believe that they could do it in the capitol," Tupas later explained in a radio interview here.

The GO senatorial candidates—Benigno Aquino III, Sonia Roco, Nikki Coseteng, John Osmeña, Aquilino Pimentel III, Francisco Escudero and Loren Legarda—were in undisclosed place somewhere in the city when they were told of the threat, according to a Capitol source.

Mejorada said they believed that the threat could only come from pro-administration personalities who did not want to see a successful opposition rally in Iloilo.

The rally, which was supposed to begin at 9 p.m., was to be the "coming out" event of the opposition in Iloilo initiated by Tupas, a close ally of Drilon.

Tupas, who fought off a dismissal order issued by the Ombudsman, has vowed a big win for the GO candidates in Iloilo which he declared an "opposition country."

Hope-James-Kris row morphs into battle of the bulge

From page A1

tended victim" in this sordid affair.

She said the disgruntled employee convinced receptionist Hope to appear over nationwide TV and claim that she had sex with James, Purefoods Tender Juicy Giants basketball team's popular off-guard, in a cubicle at the Morato branch of the Belo Medical Group.

Belo admitted that Kris got mad at her, as a result of this scandal.

James a victim

In a TV interview with Korina Sanchez aired on ANC, Belo defended James, claiming that he was "only the victim" of Hope, an obsessed fan.

She reiterated that Hope's "illusions" reached the press because of a disgruntled former employee, who resigned allegedly because of "money matters."

"If you look at it, who has the most to gain from all this? Not Hope. Not Kris. Not James. It's only this former employee who has made it a goal to destroy me. That person is the one adding fuel to the fire. This same employee even tried to break up my friendship with Boy Abunda and Kris. I've been calling (Kris), but we haven't had a chance to talk," said Belo.

"A lot of well-meaning people have told me not to grant interviews, but I pitied James. If I ignored the rumors, it was like standing idly while someone gets run over by a truck. I had to do something," Belo said.

Belo claimed that this former employee brought Hope to entertainment columnist Cristy Fermin.

This was denied by Fermin in her tabloid columns and in a phone interview with the INQUIRER. "Hope waited for me at the Rembrandt Hotel and talked to me on her own."

Belo affirmed that her legal team is now "gathering evidence in preparation for a possible legal case."

Raymond Fortun, Belo's legal counsel, confirmed this in a phone interview, saying: "We're not suing Hope. She needs psychiatric help, not a lawsuit. We are more interested in the person who inveigled Hope to come out and expose her delusions on national television, without regard for the effect it would have on other people's lives."

Conspirator identified

Fortun added that his team had already identified the "conspirator."

"The motive is personal vendetta and this is not part of any ratings war between two TV networks. There are people not connected with any network that pushed Hope to speak."

The INQUIRER sought the former Belo employee. In a phone interview, the former Belo employee promptly denied it. "My life is quiet now. I don't want to get involved in this."

As a result of the scandal, Belo has stopped offering body scrub services for men and has instituted a strict "open-door" policy in all the clinics.

In another twist, James is reportedly planning to sue Hope.

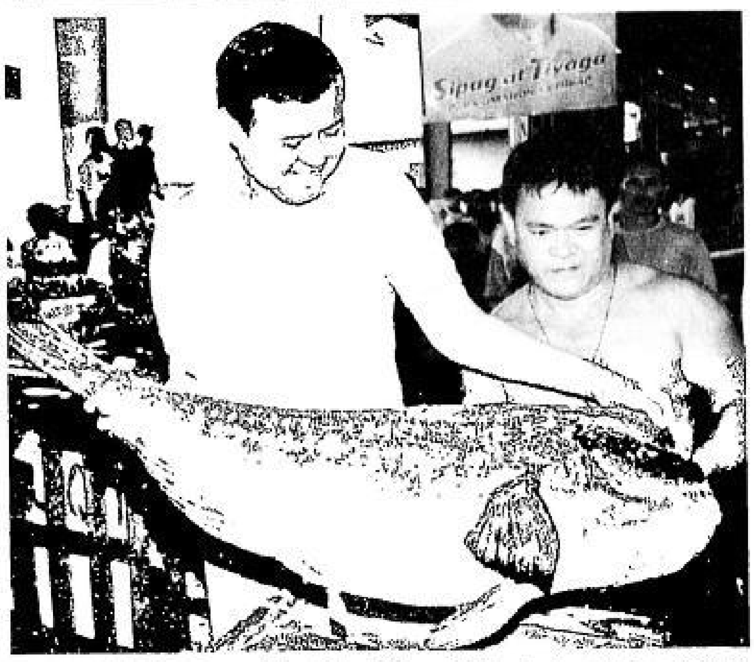
To sue Hope?

In an interview with ABS-CBN news show "TV Patrol," Kris said that she "would not interfere if ever James would file a case."

Sought for comment, James' manager Dondon Monteverde commented: "I don't know [if he is filing a case]. It's up to them. I've moved on. I just hope everyone would also move on."

James similarly avoided the media when his basketball team Purefoods Tender Juicy Giants had a press conference yesterday.

ELECTION 07



FISH MONGER. Senate President Manny Villar looks at a huge fish at the Navotas fish port where he campaigned on Tuesday. ROGER MARGALLO

Probe of drug money in polls sought

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay yesterday urged police and antidrug authorities to expedite investigations on the alleged use by candidates of campaign funds allegedly coming from illegal drug trade and other illicit sources.

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Dionisio Santiago on Tuesday said that they have been getting information from different sectors, even from rivals of politicians, that there were candidates whose campaign were supported by drug money.

Pichay called on the PDEA to validate as soon as possible these reports and file appropriate charges against those they found guilty.

"This is a very serious accusation. If it is true, the NBI, PNP and PDEA should coordinate so the political system will not be tainted by drug money. But we should also check on the campaign fund sources of all candidates to ensure that everything is above-board and there are no crime syndicates backing them."

No anti-dynasty law -- Koko

ILOILO CITY—LAWYER AQUILINO Pimentel III yesterday said Aladyn, or the Alyansa Laban sa Dynasty, is backed by the administration to undermine his candidacy and that of fellow Genuine Opposition bet Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.

Pimentel and Cayetano have been tagged for perpetuating political dynasties in the Senate because they embarked on a senatorial campaign even as they already have family members now sitting as members of the chamber.

"If you will look closely at their ads, the campaign of Aladyn is directed at the opposition. Why don't they hit as well the Team Unity candidate who has an aunt now sitting in the Senate?" Pimentel said in a news conference that kicked off GO's campaign in western Visayas.

Pimentel, a son of incumbent Senate minority leader Aquilino, Jr., said Aladyn has yet to criticize the candidacy of former Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, a nephew of administration lawmaker Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

"I'd like to appeal to the local media for fairness.

There is no law against political dynasties," Pimentel said.

Pimentel's father was one of the first proponents of an antipolitical dynasty legislation after the 1987 Constitution mandated that Congress pass a law against the perpetuation of families in elective positions. *Norman Bordadora*

Recto bats for post-harvest facilities

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) should concentrate more on improving post-harvest facilities nationwide to prevent serious losses that range from 15 percent to a high of 32 percent, according to Sen. Ralph Recto.

Using the production figure of 15.4 million metric tons of *palay* last year as basis, it means losses from a low of 1.31 million MT to 4.93 million MT, Recto said yesterday in a press statement.

At a recovery rate of 60 percent, it translates to a low of 786,000 million MT of rice to a high of 4.93 million MT, all of it gone to waste.

The huge volume of lost is far higher than the total rice importations of the country for last year.

Recto said these losses are substantial and something must be done quickly to arrest such inordinately high wastage, according to Recto.

Estimates showed that such post-harvest wastage could feed the entire population of Metro Manila for a year, along with one or two regions, for a total of 13 million people.

Recto noted that the NFA need not spend P28 billion for rice procurement this year had the DA and the agency boosted its campaign to upgrade its post-harvest facilities, like dryers and silos nationwide.

Angara wants experts in peace panel

SENATOR EDGARDO J. ANGARA has proposed the creation of a special panel of "the brightest and most committed Filipinos" to study ways to end a long-drawn communist insurgency which has survived despite the virtual extinction of similar movements elsewhere.

Angara, chair of the Senate committee on peace and reconciliation, also said that the panel should be headed by former Senate President Jovito Salonga and former University of the Philippines President Francisco Nemenzo.

"Salonga and Nemenzo have the brilliance, the experience and the commitment required to lead a panel of such sensitive task, which will deal with a problem of vital importance to the search for lasting peace," said Angara in a press statement.

Angara said that since the late 1980s , several peace panels have talked peace with the communist insurgents "only to end up in either stalemate or failure."

RULING PARTY INTRAMURAL

Team Unity eyes 'free zones'

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG FACES THE NEARLY impossible task of holding on to 30 percent of local election areas in which two or more administration allies are vying for the same post, according to Gabriel Claudio, the presidential adviser on political affairs.

The worst case scenario is for the administration to declare "free zones," that is, there will be no endorsements so that any candidate from the component parties of the administration coalition is free to contest any post.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia, president of the ruling Lakas-CMD, on Tuesday announced the official candidates in the mayoralty and gubernatorial races for 70 percent of the local elective posts up for grabs in the May elections.

He predicted that the ruling Lakas-CMD, with 46 provincial governors, would still be the "most dominant party" in the administration coalition after the midterm elections.

The other members of the administration coalition are the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), Nationalist People's Coalition, Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, the Liberal Party and the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

Lakas national executive director Raymundo Roquero said the party would field some 10,000 official candidates in the more than 17,000 local positions, representing about 60 to 70 percent of all the positions to be contested.

"We inherit an economy that is our best in the last six years. We have a big edge against the opposition whose dissonant overtures are being jeered by the electorate," said Roquero, adding that the names of congressional candidates would be released soon.

Claudio said free zones should be declared in administration strongholds, which he defined as areas where the competing candidates belong to the administration coalition, or the opposition candidates are perceived to be weak.

He confirmed that Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid has been chosen by the coalition as its official candidate in the province in keeping with the rule of the equity of the incumbent.

He said Lapid's rival, board member Lilia Pineda, herself acknowledges the rule, and could very well pursue her candidacy under her party, Kampi.

He said the coalition was still studying how to resolve the dilemma in Pampanga, in which "you have a governor who has the [equity of the incumbent] but a vast majority of incumbent mayors was supporting another candidate for governor."

"This makes the situation in Pampanga rather exceptional or unique. These are nuances or variations of the situation that we are looking at," he said.

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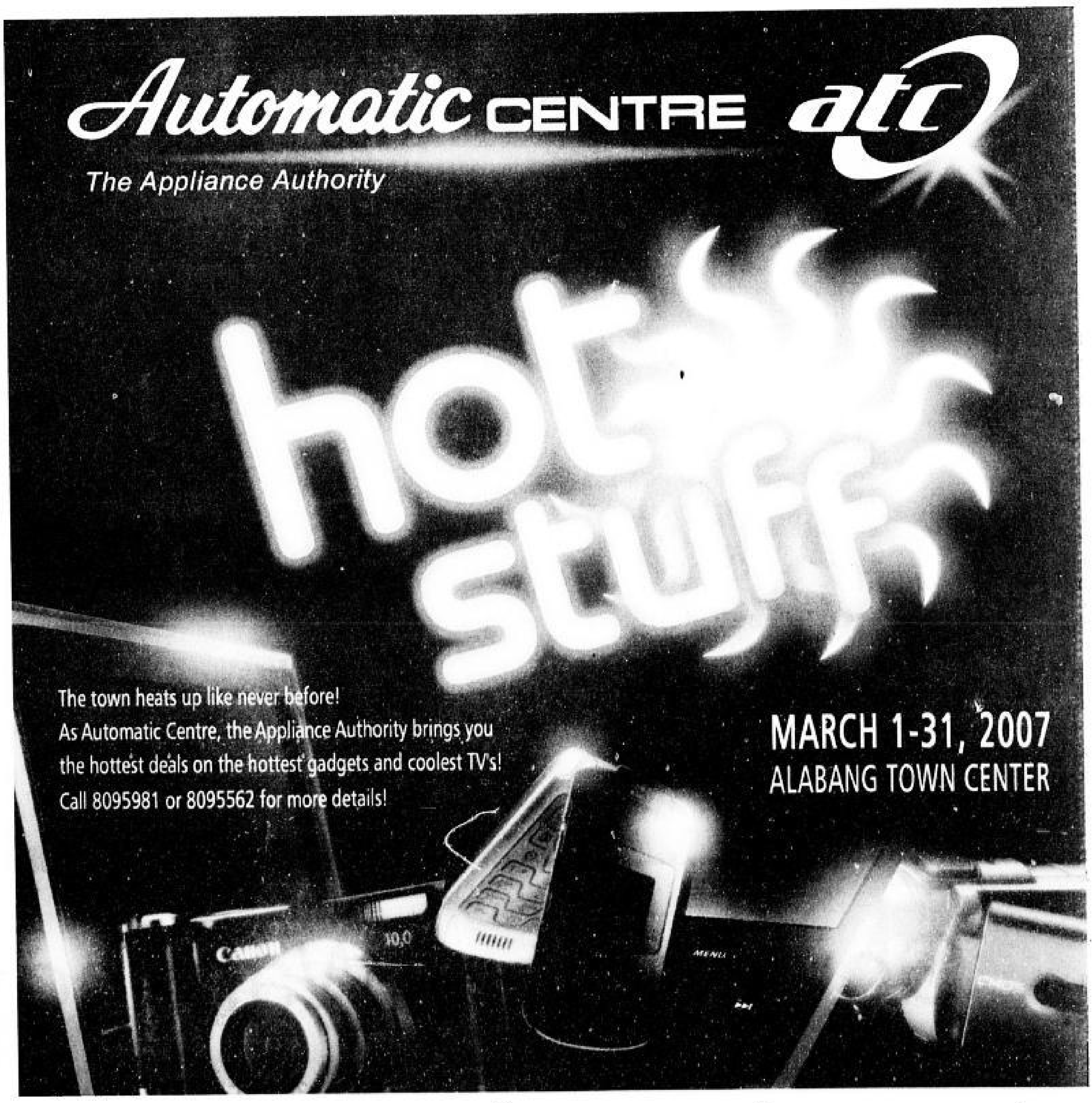

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Maceda blames Villar for Kiko fiasco in GO

From page A1

the GO leadership reserved the option to name a replacement candidate later.

Maceda said Villar had been talking to Estrada in his detention place in Tanay, Rizal, since December about the reelection plans of the Senate's so-called Wednesday Group composed of Villar, Pangilinan, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto.

Villar, who railroaded Estrada's impeachment in 2000 when he was the House Speaker, has made peace with Estrada.

"It was Villar who (has been) talking to us, including Erap, representing himself as talking on behalf of the Wednesday Group," Maceda said.

Arroyo and Recto later decided to join the administration, while Villar and Pangilinan chose to run as independent. Villar went back to see Estrada on Feb. 10 to inform him.

Discussion at the gate

Since Villar was not allowed to enter, the fateful discussion took place at the gate.

"Erap almost spontaneously said, 'Can we adopt you and Kiko as guest candidates?' And Villar said yes," Maceda recalled.

"He (Villar) said he was happy Erap himself made the offer because they were somewhat shy to make the offer. So we considered his acceptance as good for him and Kiko," he went on.

Maceda said Estrada now felt so bad about the whole thing that he became one of the earliest to suggest that Pangilinan be dropped from the lineup.

The group of former Sen. Raul Roco's widow Sonia and some civil society groups in the opposition were "the most vocal" in opposing Pangilinan's continued inclusion in the slate, said Maceda.

The "final decision" to drop Pangilinan was reached around noon of Feb. 24, shortly before the GO proclamation rally in Plaza Miranda.

At the meeting at Gloria Maris restaurant in Greenhills, Liberal Party president Sen. Franklin Drilon told the group his LP faction [there's an LP Atienza wing] would accept the decision and that it would not break away from the coalition although it would continue to support Pangilinan.

The LP faction under Drilon has another senatorial candidate, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, running under the opposition ticket.

"We could not make a decision until we're sure Drilon and the LP will accept it. We can't risk their pulling out," Maceda said.

He said the announcement of the decision was further delayed because they could not agree on a replacement. Maceda said he personally preferred getting detained ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan, while others wanted actor Richard Gomez.

Pangilinan, who was campaigning in nearby Mandaluyong City Hall, expressed relief upon hearing the news that GO had dropped him.

Not bitter, no anger

"There's no bitterness, there's no anger. It was a mutually agreed upon decision, that it is better we go our separate ways while it's early so as not to add to the strain," he said.

Loyalists of the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., led by actor Rez Cortez have been vocal against Pangilinan, whom they derided for being "Mr. Noted" since he merely "noted" the objections during the presidential election canvassing in 2004.

Pangilinan eventually joined the LP faction that called for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation in 2005 over the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal.

Maceda observed that Pangilinan wanted to court votes from both the administration and opposition sides.

But Drilon urged Maceda to "leave Kiko alone."

"The negative publicity he has inevitably generated for Kiko is not helping the cause of the Genuine Opposition," Drilon said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Veronica Uy, Inquirer.net*

Erap barks : I have nothing to do with 'ASO jingle'

From page A1

three ex-members of the opposition who are now all senatorial candidates of the administration's Team Unity.

"I have never used the term 'aso' to refer to Sen. Edgardo Angara and former Senators Vicente "Tito" Sotto and Tessie Aquino Oreta," Estrada said from his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, where he is in detention.

"My friendship with them goes beyond politics," he said. "And I don't dabble in such petty politics."

Even Adel Tamano, the campaign spokesperson of the Genuine Opposition, denied that it was Estrada who composed the jingle about "turncoats."

"He wants to disclaim it. He did not write the ASO Jingle.' It was written by supporters of FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.)," Tamano said.

When asked, however, who exactly among the late actor's supporters wrote the jingle, Tamano could not say.

"*Alam mo na yon* (You know the answer)," he said.

But Rez Cortez of the FPJ Movement admitted on several radio interviews that he was behind the making and the distribution of the jingle.

Cortez said his action was dictated by his displeasure with the three ex-allies of Estrada.

Ernesto Maceda, a close Estrada associate and one of the leaders of the GO "executive committee," was unruffled.

Maceda pointed out that the jingle did not mention any names. "If people are admitting that they're the ones referred to, that's their privilege," he said.

Gutter politics

According to opposition sources, the jingle, sung to the tune of "How Much is that Doggie in the Window," is targeted at Angara, Sotto and Oreta, who played key roles in Poe's campaign in 2004 against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

After the three announced early last month that they would hitch their wagons to Ms Arroyo's ticket, allegations that they had mismanaged Poe's campaign funds cropped up.

Angara was quick to say that it was Sotto and Oreta who had primarily run the actor's campaign, and that he had had no hand in it.

The three yesterday condemned the jingle; all ruled out Estrada's participation in it.

Angara told the INQUIRER that the jingle was slanderous and was not allowed under the Election Code, which prohibits black propaganda in the campaign.

He said Estrada would never "stoop down to gutter politics."

"This is the height of black propaganda, the dirtiest of all. Very sinister, and we know the source," he said.

Told that it was Cortez, Angara said Cortez was just being used by someone with "a shadowy past."

"The one behind it is a master of trickery and it's in the nature of his lifetime career," said Angara, who was Estrada's executive secretary in the last days of the latter's abbreviated presidency

'Not turncoats'

Sotto said he was taking the jingle with a grain of salt.

"If it was intended for recording, it would be a commercial flop," he said.

Sotto said those behind the jingle were obviously misled and ignorant of the facts surrounding his and his colleagues' transfer to Team Unity.

"We're not turncoats. [The GO] rejected us. In the case of Senator Angara, he was never invited to the opposition ticket," Sotto said, adding:

"Do they want us to just take it, lie down and die? They rejected us because they wanted to accommodate all four members of the Wednesday Group, who did not want to join them. Tessie (Oreta) was already there, but they still took in (Tarlac Rep. Benigno) Noynoy Aquino. Then they were embarrassed by their guest candidate Sen. (Francis) Kiko Pangilinan, who doesn't want to be with them."

Sotto said Estrada was "not capable" of engaging in a dirty campaign.

Yet unaware that Estrada himself had denied composing the jingle, Sotto added: "I'm disappointed because I expected him to deny it, and he's not saying anything. Knowing him for 34 years, I don't think he tolerates that kind of campaigning."

'Not his work'

Oreta said she was "deeply saddened" that those behind the jingle wanted to drive a wedge between her and Estrada.

"I know for sure, without any tinge of doubt, that the muckraking jingle being attributed to him is not his work. President Estrada is a long-time close personal friend. He is a decent man and is not capable of engaging in gutter politics," she said.

Oreta said she was confident that the "dubious shadowy characters preying" on Estrada would soon be "unmasked."

"As far as I'm concerned, these characters are the real jailers of President Erap, holding him their virtual captive through their lies, deceit and intrigue," she said.

She added that she would not let the jingle affect her campaign and distract her legislative agenda to provide free preschool education for poor children.

No rancor

Angara's party, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), said the senator had parted ways with Estrada "under the most amicable circumstances" and "with neither rancor nor bitterness."

Lawyer Ed Tumangan, LDP secretary general, said both Estrada and Angara were sufficiently "politically sophisticated to accept that political alliances may change."

He added that Oreta and Sotto came from "political families of fierce loyalty and nationalism," and that their adherence to principles was "beyond doubt." *Reports from Norman Bordadora, Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Cynthia D. Balana*

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Relocation land prices rising

FINDING SUITABLE LAND AT AFFORDABLE prices is proving to be the next daunting task for the government in relocating the survivors of Supertyphoon "Reming" in the Bicol region.

The main challenge, according to officials reached by the INQUIRER yesterday, is to find relocation sites not far from the evacuees' original homes or job sites, while hoping that "speculations" would not unduly raise the value of the properties being considered.

Social Welfare Undersecretary Celia Yangco said her department has received reports that certain private lots "suddenly rose in value after they have been identified" by the government as a possible relocation site for families displaced by Reming."

Yangco underscored this as "a very real situation" particularly in the stricken province of Albay, where some 7,000 to 8,000 families—including the 3,000 families still stuck in crowded evacuation centers—have been counted as needing new, permanent housing.

In a separate interview, though, Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzales downplayed the "situation" Yangco had described, saying "it's more the exception than the rule" as far as his provincial government's search for land was concerned.

"There are some people who might probably take advantage of the need (for relocation sites) but it is not necessarily a constraint for us right now," Gonzales told the INQUIRER on the phone.

He said it is "expected" for property values to be higher the nearer the lots are to the *poblacions* (town centers).

The provincial government, he said, has been looking for potential sites not too far from the poblacions, or else it would be taxing for the relocated families to resume their livelihood activities that are mostly based in the town centers.

Volt Contreras

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the banner story—"Power rates ordered cut"—misstated that National Power Corp.'s rate cuts could translate to a P4.30-decrease in the monthly bill of a household consuming 100kWh.

Because customers of the Manila Electric Co. get only about half of their energy supply from Napocor, the expected effect of Napocor's rate cuts would be about two centavos per kWh or P2—not P4.30—for a 100-kWh consumption.

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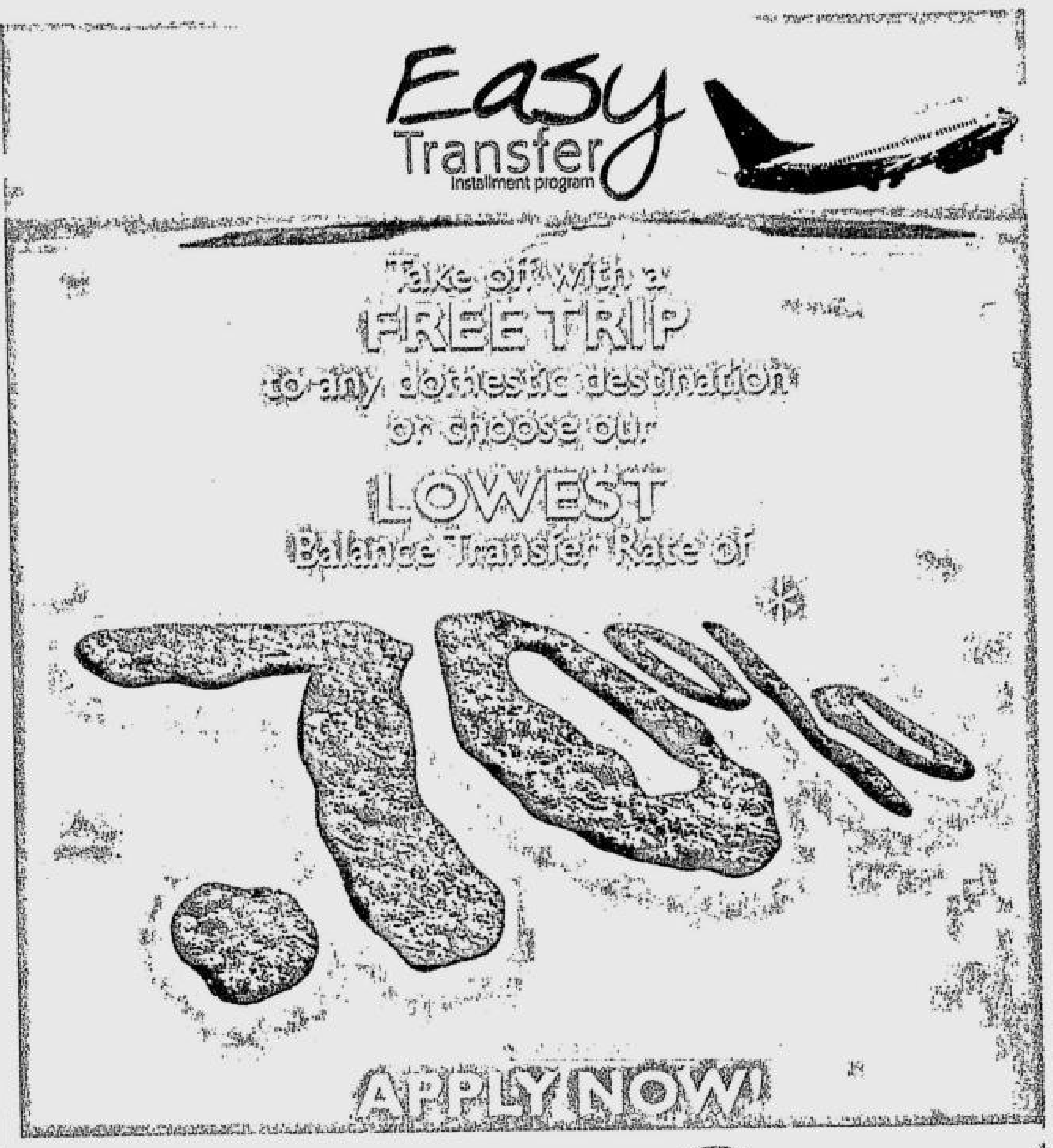
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Mission useless

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS MISSING THE point. Either that, or she is playing politics—the very thing she repeatedly asks Filipinos to refrain from for the sake of the country. And she is sowing confusion in the process.

Last Feb. 15, the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools announced that it would not issue VisaScreen certificates—a requirement for health professionals applying for work in the United States—to those who passed the leak-tainted June 2006 nursing licensure examination unless they again take and pass the equivalent of Tests 3 and 5. The President immediately directed Labor Secretary Arturo Brion to "appeal for a reconsideration of that decision" and "provide financial assistance" to those who wanted to take the tests again.

After talking to some CGFNS officials and consulting his legal staff, Brion ruled out making "a formal appeal," saying the chances of success were "slim."

However, Leonor Tripon-Rosero, chair of the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC), insisted on proceeding with the plan to appeal the decision. And she formed a delegation, independent of Brion's group, to go to the United States for the purpose.

This prompted Barbara Nichols, chief executive officer of the CGFNS, to call Rosero, apparently to dissuade the latter from proceeding on her hopeless quest. The CGFNS website reported last Saturday that during their telephone conversation, Nichols told Rosero that "no useful purpose would be served" by her going to the United States.

"The CGFNS is not a court or a government agency," Nichols reminded Rosero. "It is a private, non-profit corporation. The Board of Trustees, the highest authority of that corporation has made this decision. There is no process or provision for an appeal or reconsideration of a Board decision. There is no higher authority than the Board of Trustees."

Two days ago, Malacañang officials sounded as if they had accepted the CGFNS decision as final. When asked what was the Palace's reaction to the decision, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol told reporters: "Isn't it what the Palace has said: 'Take the exam if you want to go to the US?'" Dante Ang, chair of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos, exhorted Rosero against raising "false hopes." The appeal, if there be one, he said, should only demonstrate "our sympathy for the 17,000 (passers) .... But we should not give false hopes to our nurses given the statement of the CGFNS."

Ang should have given the advice to his boss first. A Malacañang announcement issued the next day said the President had given her blessings to a congressional delegation, headed by Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, that was going to the United States to make "a last-ditch appeal."

Why the sudden volte-face? Has the administration struck a deal with the CGFNS? Or is the President simply trying to earn brownie points with the new nurses and their relatives and friends?

The administration is "just exhausting all options," Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda said. He added that even basketball player James Yap has been given several chances by Kris Aquino to save their marriage.

Couldn't Salceda find a better way to explain Malacañang's flip-flopping than such a tasteless remark? This is not about forgiveness and mercy. The issue here is competence, the lack of which can spell the difference between life and death for patients. The CGFNS is only being faithful to its mandate. If we cannot be as professional as that, if we cannot take health care as seriously, the last thing we should do is to advertise it by persuading others to lower their own professional standards.

The cheating in the June 2006 nursing board exam was more than enough embarrassment for the nation. It adds to our embarrassment that it is the CGFNS now showing us the way to a respectable, decent and professional resolution of this cheating scandal, and ultimately to redeeming the reputation of Filipino nurses.

The CGFNS is telling everyone how to "move on" after the cheating-marred June 2006 nursing exam. Unfortunately, some people in government, including the President, cannot resist the opportunity to play politics again.

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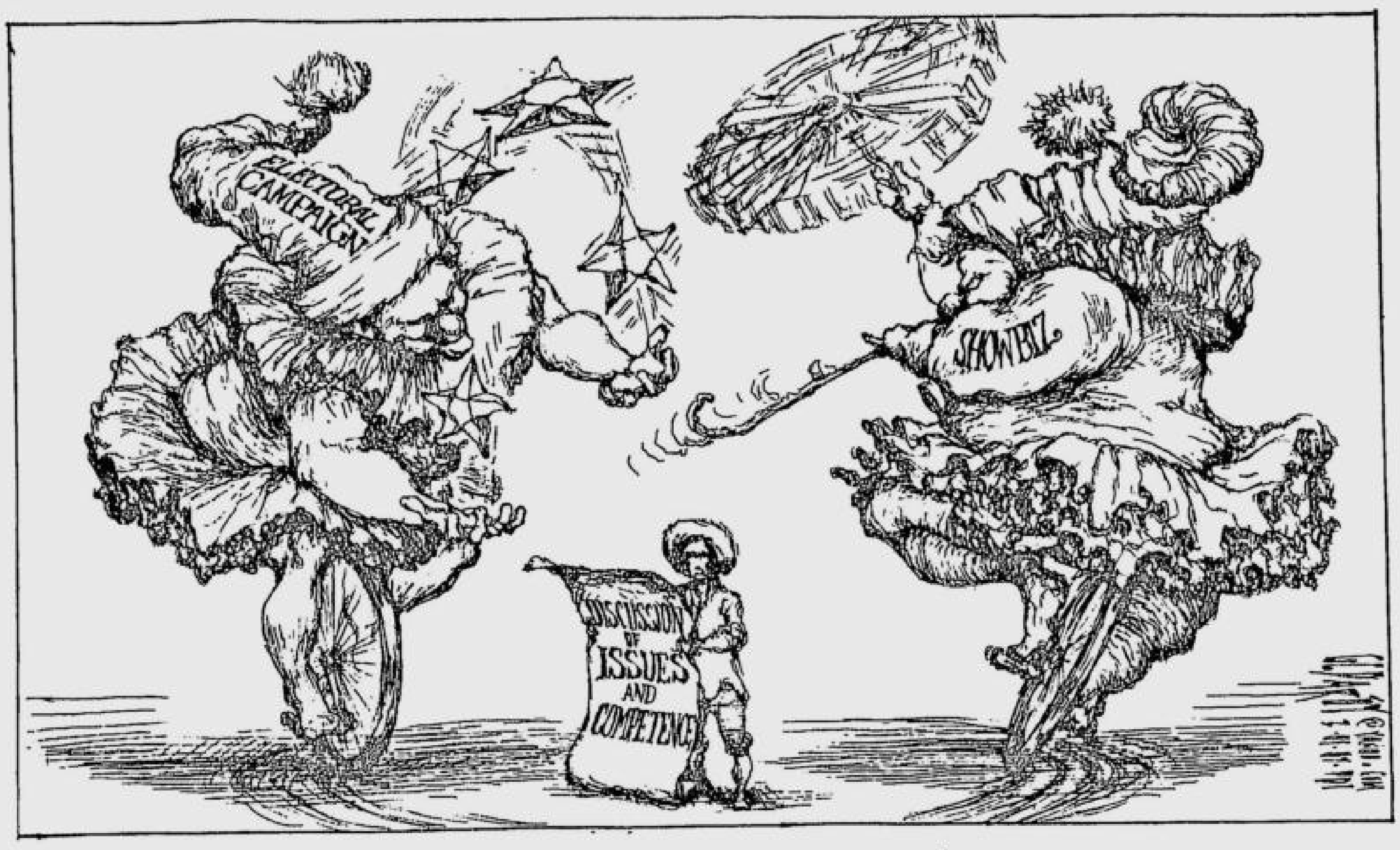
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Clothesline signal

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

KIDS' SCHOOL UNIFORMS FLAPPING ON clotheslines don't raise eyebrows. Except when they're strung in ghettoes of indigenous tribal people, like the Atis in Sitio Bolabog in glitzy Boracay. "That's something I didn't see before," e-mailed former World Health Organization's Rabin Sarda.

"Those uniforms are indicators of hope," says Doctor Sarda, who shuttles between Miami and Boracay but helps the once-nomadic Atis. "Those clotheslines say: 'More Atis are now in school—and getting a chance to break out of penury.'"

Progress inches forward despite relentless pressure by tax declaration-waving claimants to shove out Atis from what they consider home. The Catholic Church's Commission on Indigenous Peoples backs the Atis' December 2001 claim for a certificate of ancestral domain title. And Sen. Jamby Madrigal blasted those who are shoving, with threats and P2,000-handouts, the Atis out. "The beautiful white beaches cannot disguise the disgusting reality of a concentration camp being built among Boracay's tourist attractions," she wrote.

Daughters of Charity nuns, who live among the Atis, are "judiciously using a medicine fund provided by private citizens," Sarda notes. They first use donated drugs before drawing from the fund. "More individuals and organizations contribute time and in kind," including help to repair typhoon-damaged homes. And contributions to a feeding program to tamp down malnutrition have stabilized. An informal education program for the youth is ongoing. In school year 2007-2008, two Atis will enter college with scholarships from self-effacing benefactors."

A February bonus was a Mass wedding for 18 couples. An upscale hotel even provided the banquet. "If we keep sprigs of hope in our hearts," the Chinese say, "the singing bird will come."

From Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, Patrick H. O'Brien reacts to an earlier column, "Reading beyond labels," (INQUIRER, 5/24/05) which reported that a US Food and Drug Administration study on the military's $1-billion medical stockpile found out that drugs remained effective even 15 years beyond their expiry dates.

"[I'm] a US pharmacist who worked with eight medical/surgical missions to the Philippines," O'Brien e-mailed. "Two were to Tagbilaran City in 1992 and 1994. And I applaud the common sense and non-political approach to the issue of expiration dating on medications in this unbiased column.

"As with most things, expiration dates are simply guidelines to be used. Medications are more affected by storage conditions than by a simple date. How many of us have gotten relief from a headache from a Tylenol that passed its expiration date? How many of us actually look at the expiry dates on medicines?

"The well-intentioned Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) advises that medicines imported by foreign medical missions must have at least a one-year expiration date. That may be appropriate for international pharmaceutical companies' imports. But it puts an enormous burden on medical mission donations. They receive most of their donated drugs with a short expiration date of two to six months. How can I request donations, then demand a one-year expiration date?

"Our mission group will leave for a surgical mission to Roxas City. We accumulated medicines that are not expired but lack BFAD's one-year required dating. Worse, efforts to contact BFAD to arrange an inspection, by e-mail, regular mail and phone, all went unanswered. Maybe they're busy dreaming up other rules?"

From Toronto in Canada, V.A. Sanoy writes: "Your column 'Washing filthy water' is relevant. Providing safe sufficient water for basic needs of people is one monumental failure of our government, unfortunately at all levels.

"We had one incident of water contamination here. It cost a few lives and there were countless victims of e-coli infections. But the government spent millions and three years of inquiries to get to the bottom of the crisis. It resulted in criminal charges, compensation for victims and measures to make sure it would never happen again."

"The Viewpoint column reveals that scores of fatalities already resulted from unsafe water. And the problems seems to be getting worse.

"And why is this government drumming about becoming a First World country, when it can not even provide the most important basic necessity for the people? Instead, we read of some political leaders stealing government funds in the millions—and getting away with it.

"What justice system have you got there anyway? It is sad, because hard as we try to help the country we claim as our birthplace, her leaders, political as well as civic, refuse to help her."

From Elizabeth, New Jersey, Dr. Jose Chua writes: "I read your column 'A mixed bag.' (INQUIRER, 1/25/07) Here is my experience:

"I left the Philippines in 1974 as a 27-year-old youngster. Now, I'm almost 60. And I can not yet return or retire. I still must ensure my family's welfare.

"I am a doctor. I enjoy financial stability. However, my nephews are already college graduates. Yet, they cannot support their families, even if they have jobs. So, they still get a subsidy from me. Probably I am an enabler.

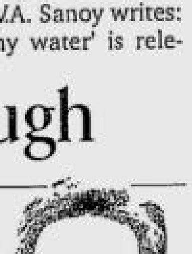
"That was the same plight I found myself in then. Already a physician, I taught in the medical school of a major Manila university. Yet, my income could hardly support my family. Is there any chance that the Philippines will improve?"

* * *

E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com

Last laugh

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

I KNEW MY COLUMN LAST WEEK ON MARTIN Bautista and the other senatorial candidates of the Kapatiran Party would stir not a few souls. If I felt strongly about the merit—albeit tremendously unappreciated, or at least horrendously unheralded—that Bautista and his colleagues' decision to run represented, others must have felt it, too. I was quite unprepared, however, for the level of enthusiasm that greeted my column.

My cell phone was abuzz last week with text messages variously endorsing what I said, vowing to vote for Bautista and the others, and asking for the Kapatiran contact numbers to volunteer their services. And that was just from people who knew my number. I could only imagine how many others felt. Some message-senders even said they would vote for no other senatorial candidates than just the three from Kapatiran. Those candidates were originally four, but Mario Ongkiko had to withdraw upon doctor's orders. The spirit was more than willing but, alas, the flesh was loath to cooperate.

It confirms what I've felt for some time: that now more than ever is the best time to run as an independent, or at least not as a candidate of the administration or opposition parties, not as a candidate of Team Unity or GO. In normal times, running out of the sheltering cove of a mainstream party, with its manifold resources, would be a kiss of death. But these are not normal times. And what would have been a kiss of death otherwise could very well be the breath of life.

There is a vast reservoir of bitterness, resentment, disappointment, dismay, frustration, disgust, anger and seething outrage out there. Those sentiments come from the fact that while most people detest the administration (whose illegitimacy they have no doubt about, given the particularly graphic evidence of the "Hello Garci" tape), they are unable to trust the opposition either. Or the so-called opposition, in great part populated by the faces they saw during the Erap impeachment trial. I truly could not understand why the more principled individuals proposing to woo the voters did not constitute themselves as the "real opposition" (I hate the idea of a "third force," with its suggestion of being a token and marginal intrusion) and tap that reservoir of anger.

Indeed, the opposite has happened, the candidates playing musical chairs with principle, such as they had it in the first place, the administration candidates playing devil's advocates and some opposition figures joining the administration slate. And those left out putting up all sorts of *mestizo* coalitions.

All this has done is to make people more cynical and resentful so that you can hear the gnashing of teeth from here to Aparri. In the face of another grand farce, they can only wonder, like the inhabitants of the Burning Pit below, if there will ever be an end to their torment.

My first instinct in light of this development was to write a column proposing a farce to meet a farce. What I had in mind, in particular, was suggesting that someone like Ilona Staller, a.k.a. Cicciolina, run in the May elections. For those who have never heard of her, Cicciolina is a hardcore porn star who ran—and won—a seat in the Italian parliament. She had a number of causes, among them an end to nukes and no end to free love. She did not lack for diplomatic initiatives, volunteering to go to bed with Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden if that was what it took to bring them to the table—the negotiating table, that is.

My own suggestions for our elections (the congressional seats and various local offices are still open for anyone to contest) include: One, a stripteaser, or anyone of those who regularly take their clothes off, artistically or not, in the joints on Quezon Avenue and elsewhere. She can always campaign on a platform of transparency. Two, a prostitute, in-house or out-house. She can use as campaign motto, "Always a pleasure to serve." Three, a beggar, with or without guitar and amplifier. He or she can always tell the Americans: "Beggars cannot be choosers." Four, a metro aide. She can always vow to clean up this country. Five, any or all of the "statehooders." They can always propose in Congress a plebiscite that goes beyond Cha-cha to the US annexing the Philippines, as though it hasn't done so already.

But Nandy Pacheco, the guiding force of Kapatiran, has done one better. He has shown that there is a better way to meet farce other than by farce. That is to meet farce by seriousness. That is to meet the usual jokers and charlatans with honest and decent alternatives. Of course, some will say that that is still meeting farce with farce, Kapatiran itself being pretty much a joke in these elections. But if you think that way, then you should know that life is not springing the joke on you, you are springing the joke on yourself. And a pretty nasty joke it is, too.

It's not true at all that this country has no alternatives. The alternatives are there, it's just that we keep rejecting or ignoring them out of fear of being ridiculed or turned away from the pack. Well, maybe, we're getting a little wiser, the welts on our backs from being whipped again and again helping to push us in that direction. I myself am personally elated by the warm response my column on the Kapatiran candidates elicited. Doubtless, it is as yet a faint stirring, but it could very well turn into a roaring tide. There is a protest vote out there, and all it takes is a spark to ignite it. The Kapatiran candidates might yet provide that spark.

Who knows? Maybe this country could get mad enough to ram all three of them into the Senate. Maybe this country could get sane enough to allow Nandy and his merry men to have the last laugh.

And the rest of us along with them.

Catching up on political developments

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A GROUP OF US WOMEN IN MEDIA GATHERED at our residence recently to celebrate the citation of INQUIRER founding chair Eggie Apostol and our editor in chief, Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc, among Time Asia's "heroes" in the past 60 years. They did us proud with this singular honor, for all of us have worked with Eggie and Letty at one time or another in their long career. The only men in the group were my husband and Muslim leader Saeed Daof, who's running under the party-list group Agham, which aims to promote science and technology. Japanese food washed down with Chilean wine and a convivial atmosphere deriving from friendships that have lasted decades went quite well with the breezy weather. We all had a good time talking about political personalities and the latest developments, like how politics is dividing some political families such as the Aquinos, the Rectos and the Asistios.

* * *

Lupita Aquino-Kashiwahara, who flew in from a trip to Cebu City with the President earlier in the day, was roundly congratulated for the successful coverage of Team Unity's proclamation rally last week in that city. Some of us couldn't help but contrast it with the poor showing in Plaza Miranda of the Genuine Opposition (GO) proclamation rally last weekend. To the question of what happened, the answer of Lupita, who's GMA's image-consultant, was that GO thrives only on negativism and attacks, whereas Team Unity constantly harps on the administration's programs and projects, filling people with hope and optimism. She also noted that Team Unity is exhibiting a high morale and bonding that didn't seem possible at the beginning. I reported the fantastic result of a recent straw vote among housemaids going to night classes at De La Salle University in Greenhills, which showed no celebrities or *artistas* landed among the top.

* * *

Even if the delegation that will meet with the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools were to succeed in winning a reversal of its decision not to allow Filipino nurses who took the June 2006 board exams to work in the United States, there would still be the question of confidence in our nurses' competence—something that wasn't there until a part of the board exams became tainted by cheating last year. How can that confidence be restored? The only way is for the government to make sure that no leakage would taint the board exams again, and that those who were behind the cheating are prosecuted and the review centers involved are closed. No less than a thorough cleansing of the profession can restore confidence in the competence of our nurses.

* * *

There are reports of intense lobbying by the multinationals against the government's determined efforts to bring down the price of medicines especially for the masses. The government's campaign has been led by Philippine International Trading Corp. president Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan. The PITC's strategy is to import lower-priced drugs from countries like India, even as arrangements have been made for the mass manufacture of lower-priced quality drugs by Zuellig Pharma and locally based drug manufacturers such as Hizon and Pascual Laboratories. The lobby is to be expected, as a successful campaign to manufacture or import cheaper-priced drugs is bound to diminish their enormous profits from branded medicines.

By the way, I read an item that said that Lipitor, the cholesterol-lowering drug, is the world's best-selling pharmaceutical. Made by Pfizer, the world's largest pharmaceutical company, Lipitor brought sales of $3.34 billion last year. It's still considered by many doctors to be the best medicine around, but lately its sales have declined a bit because Merck's competing statin, Zocor, lost patent protection last year, opening the market to generics possibly as early as 2010. Pfizer is said to be relying on a new cardiovascular drug to recoup an anticipated decline in income from the sale of Lipitor.

* * *

My feeling about the drug price war is that both the expensive brand drugs and the cheaper versions should have their markets. The affluent can continue buying the more expensive brands as they have confidence in them, but the masses have to be provided cheap but quality medicines. Right now, as has been noted, the poor often fail to take the prescribed doses especially of antibiotics because they're too expensive, thus hindering cure.

There are a number of reasons why branded drugs are expensive here but sold at much cheaper prices in other countries. Among them are the high cost of production here (higher wages and cost of raw materials) and the corruption attending the distribution and transport of drugs. But a "hidden" cost that jacks up the prices of medicines is the huge representation expenses shouldered by drug companies in sponsoring medical conventions in fancy places here or abroad, and the foreign trips-cum-vacations of doctors. Perhaps this ought to be looked into by regulating bodies as well as private watchdogs.

* * *

Friends and colleagues of former National Security Adviser and former University of the Philippines president Emmanuel "Noel" Soriano would be happy to know that he reached the biblical age of 70 last Dec. 30. Noel has been recovering nicely from a cerebral stroke that afflicted him in 1996 and left him without speech and his right extremities paralyzed. But the outpouring of love and support for him from his family and friends has helped him recover well. Lately he has turned to art therapy sessions with Maria Abulencia. In celebration of Life and Love, Noel will inaugurate an exhibit of 70 of his paintings, titled "Emanuel: A Fisherman's Story," this Saturday, March 3, at 3 p.m. at Delaney Hall in UP Diliman. The exhibit runs until March 7, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Everyone is invited to the launch.

An American nun's Edsa I letters (2)

Human Face

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

MARYKNOLL MISSIONARY SR. HELEN GRAham has been working in the Philippines since 1967. As a theologian who teaches Sacred Scriptures in two religious institutions, Sister Helen has put her theology into practice and has been very involved in justice and peace issues.

During the volatile season that preceded and culminated in the February 1986 Edsa I People Power uprising, Sister Helen chronicled daily events (from Feb. 10 to Feb. 26) in her letters to friends abroad. Excerpts:

* * *

February 25, 1986 4:15 p.m.
Dear everybody,.

I just got home! Went out early this morning to see what was going on at Club Filipino where Cory and Doy had their inauguration ceremony. I've been standing a long time. They were finally sworn in about 10:30 a.m. and from there I went to Pepe Diokno's house for lunch. It's his birthday tomorrow. *Siya ang bayani ko talaga!!!*

How to recount the last 24 hours here! Yesterday morning there was a kind of meeting-reflection with the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Women in the Philippines. In the afternoon I went over to Camp Crame to get the feel of things. There were so many people it was almost impossible to walk! The crowd stretched from Ortigas to Farmer's Market. I guess that would be four kilometers. It was wall-to-wall people guarding both the military camps.

Yesterday morning while Ferdinand Marcos (FM) was giving a live speech on TV to disprove the report that he had already left the country, he was cut off. The rebel forces captured the TV station (a gov't run station confiscated from the Lopez family at the beginning of the martial law period). I understand the Lopez family is allowing Radio Veritas to use the station during this crisis.

In this situation one realizes the VERY important role of communications. The government-controlled TV and radio stations have been broadcasting lies for 14 years and no one would believe they were lies until the election and so many people had their own personal experience of being cheated.

Even while hundreds of thousands were in the streets and it was obvious that FM was finished, these stations continued to broadcast that FM was in control. People in the provinces did not know any better. So, Radio Veritas performed a very significant role in the happenings.

This morning during Marcos' own inauguration the rebel forces captured Channels 9, 2 and 13 while about to air FM's inauguration. Now all of the communications (TV that is) are in the hands of the Cory-Enrile-Ramos forces.

The situation is grave at the moment and will be for the next few days. FM has called on all his goons to come and defend him. There are snipers everywhere. Hundreds of thousands of people are in the streets protecting the different TV stations from the Marcos loyalist forces. Earlier this morning it was reported that six tanks and a large number of military were on their way from Northern Luzon to Manila. There are thousands at various barricades to prevent these loyalist forces from entering the ciry.

But with all that has happened and is still happening, I am very uneasy. This is NOT really a revolution in the true sense. This is a revolution that has been coopted from the masses. This is a revolution of the middle.

Today at her inauguration, Cory appointed Enrile as Minister of Defense and Ramos as Chief of Staff. These are the same ones who had run the military during the martial law period. They are responsible for thousands of arrests, torture, murder, disappearances, etc. They are overnight heroes, newly converted, "born-again." Today, Cory asserted herself…people were afraid that Enrile and Ramos were really taking over. And they might still do that. She does have a mind of her own and I hope she can stick to that.

So the next two days are quite uncertain…

Love,
Helen

* * *

February 26, 1986
Dear everybody,

There were reports last night that four US helicopters picked up Marcos, his family, some of his people and his henchman, Gen. Ver and took flew them to Clark Air Base where they enplaned several hours later for Guam on their way to ????? When the helicopters took off, thousands of people surged into Malacañang Palace which has been closed and heavily guarded and barricaded for the past 20 years. Some began to loot and others formed a human barricade to prevent looting. There was a great rejoicing during the night. It is estimated that some 20,000 people surged through the palace during the night.

Voice of America announced at 6 a.m. that FM was on his way to Guam. Philip Habib is on his way back to speak with the Aquino government. The State Department issued a statement that the purpose of the military aid to the Philippines is to professionalize the military so that it could deal more effectively with the "communist insurgency" estimated to be about 20,000-strong. This gives me pause in the midst of great jubilation and celebration of victory.

Now that the "smoke" has cleared, we see Cory in place as our President. A woman, a valiant woman, who has demonstrated the highest qualities in the midst of this whole situation. A woman who has risen to the need of the hour and whose firmness, and non-political behavior communicated credibility and enabled people to trust for the first time in the 14 years of martial law. If she had wavered for a moment, this "people power" would not have risen to such a pitch.

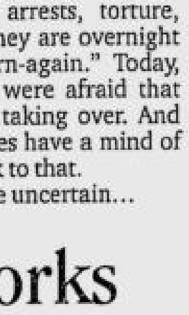
I urge Americans to complain about the US being a dumping ground for former dictators and their military henchmen who have repressed their people for so many years. Let not our country become a haven for dictators.

Love,
Helen

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

How it works



The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

RECENTLY I RECEIVED A TEXT MESSAGE FROM a reader, who feels frustrated that the media aren't doing enough to remind people what certain jobs in our government are about. Understanding what these jobs are will help voters clarify in their minds whom to vote for—and why, the reader texted. Let me offer up a framework. We're probably familiar with the "Mission, Vision" exercise than we are with concepts such as "separation of powers." So let's use that framework.

- The Vision for our future, the statement of what we, collectively as a country, want to become, is our Constitution.
- The Mission, defined in documents on what our government precisely does, comes in the form of the laws our Congress drafts, debates on and approves in consultation with the chief executive and the public.
- Values, the core beliefs that should shape official actions, are embodied in our Constitution, but they are also the subject of legislation; and, equally important, they are what individual leaders try to represent and live up to as they go about official business.
- Strategies are the broadly defined key approaches that government says it will use, to accomplish the national vision. Generally, it's the chief executive, the President, who outlines strategy; but because government branches usually have some overlapping functions to keep officials on their toes, legislators can propose strategies, too.
- Finally, Goals and Action Plans—the official guide to the daily, weekly and monthly actions of government—are generally the exclusive province of the president, who supervises the bureaucracy. As chief executive, he/she must ensure that everything government does is in keeping with the Constitution's Vision, Congress' assigned Mission, the citizenry's Values as reflected in public opinion, the administration's Strategies (hopefully arrived at through debate and by consensus), and the administration's Goals and Action Plans (again hopefully arrived at by consensus and with the support of the public).

There's a Spanish saying that man proposes but God disposes—which may explain why presidents tend to feel they're gods and why legislators are often impatient to secure the chief executive's job for themselves. That being the case, the concept of checks and balances is about legislators keeping—whether out of sincerity or ambition—a president from thinking he/she enjoys the divine right of kings. One of the best ways to do this—indeed the way that's given rise to the modern concept of dividing government into separate branches—is the way to keep any aspiring king in his place: to firmly control his wallet, and have a say in how he staffs the government.

The senator or the congressman, then, has three things to do: monitor, propose and approve.

The members of Congress are supposed to monitor the president's behavior, to ensure that what the president does is in keeping with the Constitution, in accordance with laws, and in the interest of the common good, which is what all those plans, pie charts, statistics and slogans are supposed to be about. The same applies to the underlings of any president, who might be tempted to engage in foolishness. If something seems fishy, then Congress launches an investigation: and sometimes, that's enough.

Since public opinion plays a role in how an official conducts his business, a good scare or shock by means of hearings and reports, is enough to restore balance.

If the result is a law or resolution that seeks to amend existing legislation to close off a loophole, or to outline an additional national policy, or to scrap a law altogether (although the ones outlined in the Constitution are generally sacrosanct until the next Charter change), so much the better. This is the proposal part—legislators can propose remedies to the law, or even new laws—which includes not just how much to spend on what, but also what the government's Mission should be (because not everything can be fixed by throwing money at it). They can simply make noise, too: a good way, we should remember, of scaring away vermin.

And members of Congress have the task of deciding whether to apply the stamp of approval on a broad range of things. Is so-and-so fit to be a member of the Cabinet? Does the Strategy proposed by a president fulfill the government's Mission, in keeping with its Vision? If it does, fund it; if not, trash it altogether; at the very least, if it leaves something to be desired, challenge it—because who else will?

Since both the Senate and the House make up Congress, then it's Congress' job to determine how the money in the national wallet should be doled out, and how much freedom the president's men (and women) get to manage those funds. And that begins with deciding if those individuals should have those jobs or not.

But the Constitution limits all these things, which is why the Commission on Appointments may approve or reject the appointment of a Cabinet secretary but not that of an undersecretary; and why ambassadors and the higher ranks of the officer corps are screened, but promotions on a lower level aren't specifically congressional business. It isn't a senator's or congressman's job to monkey around with lower-level positions on the basic managerial principle that once you've approved a manager, he should have the liberty to hire and fire his staff—within reason, that is, within the provisions of law.

The interference members of Congress engage in, their pork barrel allocation and their approving, for themselves, allowances and other perks, are traditions—not basic requirements or obligations—of their jobs. Guarding the national wallet, and guarding the chief executive: those are the basics.

Refuse to use

Young Blood

Anna Rhea R. Manuel

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

EVERY TIME I REFUSE TO USE STRAWS, OR OFFER MY cloth bag to the bagger at the supermarket, or reprimand total strangers for throwing trash or spitting on the sidewalk, or say I'm a vegetarian for ethical reasons, people ask me if I've turned environmentalist. It's as if turning into one is like turning into a *manananggal* at night and assuming a human form during the day, as if one cares for the environment one day, and becomes indifferent to it the next. The term carries a seemingly exclusive and elitist connotation to a lot of people. But it isn't, and it shouldn't.

There are a number of NGOs whose advocacy is the protection and conservation of the environment. I commend the commitment and efforts these people have, and the dangers they put themselves through to fight for their cause. Probably, they're the most unselfish people in the world.

A friend, who belongs to one such NGO, shared with us his experience during his last climb. When he reached the peak of the mountain and saw the gorgeous landscape below, he said to himself, "I want my future children and grandchildren to see this." But he was worried that the mountain with its thick vegetation might not be in the future.

I've been in Manila most of my life, constantly complaining about the smog, the trash, the almost unlivable Pasig River, and the horrendous unhygienic habits of people. Even so, I make time to bike around the Marikina River Park and enjoy whatever is left of the urban greenery. Ironically, that relatively small area alone has both confirmed my feeling of luck that I live in Marikina (of all the places in Metro Manila) and further intensified my need to live elsewhere. Despite the community-friendly River Park, with its nice landscape and attractions, I fear that eventually, the river will stop flowing, and everything along with it, unless something is done soon.

I don't belong to any environmentalist organization, but an increased awareness of what's happening provides enough drive for me to make people respond to the need to change. I make-do with what I have and where I am pushing for an advocacy I share with those affiliated with big groups.

In the little school where I teach, I was able to integrate this nagging compulsion with the subject matter in our English class. Considering the students' abilities and experiences, my co-teachers and I deemed it practical to focus our efforts on reducing the use of plastic. So we designed a batch project entitled "Refuse to Use." There was a series of activities followed by a symposium on the environmental toll our use (or misuse) of plastic is taking.

This project has three phases. The first is the personal refusal to use plastic. The students are instructed to refuse plastic items or bags whenever they go to *sari-sari* stores, shops or malls. Instead, they bring with them cloth bags or recycled plastic bags or, if the item is small (and dry) enough, they put them in their pockets or carry them. The students note down the reaction of the bagger or *tindero*.

The students found out that most shop owners and salespeople approved of the project because it cut costs and not really because it helps lessen pollution.

The second phase is the signature campaign, in which each student gathers at least 300 signatures from members of their families, neighbors, communities and elsewhere. We are expecting a total of at least 14,000 signatures.

The last phase involves writing a petition to reduce the use of plastic in businesses. We are writing to small-scale industries, mall owners, newspapers and government agencies to seek their help in spreading this concern.

Right after the students submitted the output for the first phase, I asked who among them continued to refuse the use of plastic. Nobody did.

It was a disappointing result, but expected. For how can one change a habit (which took 10 or 15 years to develop) over a course of two weeks? How can we expect parents to understand when they themselves don't see the need? Even at home, despite constant reminders from me, my dad still accumulates an average of five plastic bags per day. He says he forgets and he just can't refuse. It is frustrating, and discouraging.

I mulled over this predicament and realized that respect for the environment, readiness, will and commitment are crucial if we want actual changes to happen.

Everything comes from respect. A child follows a parent's advice because he respects the parent's capability to give sound advice. One does not eat meat because one respects an animal's right to live. Lack of respect results in abuse, destruction, indifference.

People should be ready to change their lifestyles. The simple act of refusing a straw can cause strain or perhaps embarrassment to any person doing it the first time, but I don't know why it should. We can buy biscuits in bigger packages instead of small ones. Or we can bring a cloth bag everywhere and explain to the bagger or *manong* to use the bag instead of plastic, whenever we buy something.

When one is ready, one has the will to adapt to any changes because one believes in the urgency of doing so. In the long run, one develops a commitment. The scope of commitment is relative to an individual's capacity and resources. If one is committed to something, one is willing to be the catalyst of change.

I can accept that we lack the respect, readiness, will and commitment to change our ways for the environment. The urban Filipino psyche is not geared toward this concern. This is all the more reason to intensify our advocacy. For shall we wait to show respect until we have condemned the earth to an irreversible slide to destruction? Shall we be ready to do something only when great damage has been done to the environment? Will we summon the will only when there's nothing left for us to salvage? Shall we develop a commitment to save the eartth only when we have destroyed everything that nourishes the human race?

When I am asked if I've turned environmentalist, I answer: Shouldn't we all be?

Anna Rhea R. Manuel, 25, is taking up her master's in Reading Education at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She is also an English teacher at the UP Integrated School.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Edsa I: a miracle that's fading

POLITICAL ANALYSTS OFTEN say that Edsa I was a shining moment in Philippine history. Participants in that event say it was a miracle. Priests, nuns, seminarians, novices and thousands of Filipino men and women from all walks of life, the old and the young, faced, without an iota of fear, the soldiers of President Ferdinand Marcos in what is now known as historic Edsa. "Armed" with only rosaries and roses, they stopped the roaring tanks and prevented a bloody massacre, as soldiers deserted their commander in chief who was holed up in Malacañang.

That bloodless People Power brought down the Marcos regime and installed Corazon Aquino as President. It became an object of awe and a model of sovereign expression for all the world.

Indeed, history educates and inspires. History teaches valuable lessons to guide us. But it seems our present government officials have forgotten the lessons of the past. The heroes of Edsa I and II, corrupted by power, have turned into villains.

History is repeating itself. Unless they change, they are doomed into the same fate as their predecessors'. Judgment day is coming. The signs say so.

—VIC J. COLUMNA,
vicjcolumna@yahoo.com

Mahal Ko Bayan Ko lauds Joker Arroyo, Ralph Recto

WE HAVE READ WITH GREAT interest the published full-page statement of Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto. Mahal Ko Bayan Ko (MKBK) lauds these two senators and expresses its appreciation on the position they have taken. What they have declared is so much in harmony with our own.

Despite winning under the administration slate, these two senators did not hesitate to oppose, fight, disagree with the administration whenever they thought it was called for. MKBK esteems their courage and forthrightness.

But as they pointed out "through all these, the President never tried to dissuade us from opposing her." This is true statesmanship—on both sides. MKBK commends them.

The statement ends with "On balance, until the opposition can offer something more than the impeachment of the President, the country is better off letting this administration complete the work it is doing while keeping a close watch on anything else it may attempt." MKBK resoundingly endorses this stand.

We applaud Senators Arroyo and Recto.

—EVELYN KILAYKO
(on behalf of the executive board),
Mahal Ko Bayan Ko

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Manny Pacquiao's dream and reality

IT NOW APPEARS THAT BOXING icon Manny Pacquiao is really running for Congress. He will face Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio of South Cotabato.

It is not a crime to have a dream. You and I know that I can dream of being president of the Philippine Republic. And no one can stop me from the illusion of holding in my hands the awesome power of the office. But a dream is different from reality.

First, there is the reality of limitation. Manny might have a powerful left hand that can send an opponent into dreamland, but Manny must realize that the session hall of Congress is not a boxing arena. Rather, it is a place where laws of the land are crafted, a place where minds, not hands, are at play.

Let's not kid ourselves. Manny—if he wins—is a misfit in Congress, another addition to the already shameless members of the Committee on Silence. His advisers should be honest enough to tell him that.

—AMADOR P. MORILES,
Capoocan, Leyte

Comic breaks from serious politics

IN EXPLAINING WHY THEY joined Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's senatorial slate, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto said they won in 2001 as administration candidates and, since then, they have seen nothing that would justify their getting out of GMA's slate. Both may be showing signs of vision failure—the elder due to cataract affliction, and the younger due to congenital myopia.

Subsequently, Senator Arroyo asked his critics who would replace GMA if she were impeached. There was no need to tell him that: under the the Constitution, the Vice President is next in line. Or was it his way of expressing his lack of faith and confidence in Vice President Noli de Castro's capability?

If extra-constitutional measures are resorted to, there is Manny Pacquiao whose popularity far outstrips even that of Erap, who to this day is still waiting in the wings to take over from GMA; except that Pacquiao's goal is just a modest seat in Congress where he may be catapulted to the Speaker's seat, considering that Jose de Venecia is lined up for thrashing in his district come May elections. Pacquiao could end inane debates among congressmen full of hot air with a straight left, followed by a right cross.

Chaos in the cobbling of GMA's ticket was evident during the proclamation of her 12th senatorial candidate from Sulu, whom she introduced as the Sultan of Brunei. Also, there was the withdrawal of a governor soon after it was announced that he was among GMA's senatorial candidates; whereupon actor Cesar Montano was shanghaied from a commercial ad shooting session and taken to Malacañang to be proclaimed as the governor's replacement.

The opposition is not in any better shape either. Relying on Erap's apparent popularity with the masses and on the perception that he can bankroll their campaign from a fabled loot he has allegedly absconded from *jueteng* and tobacco excise tax funds, there are rumors of reciprocal junking among Genuine Opposition candidates who have extreme dislike for each other.

Now comes the fielding by the KBL of an unknown, Joselito Pepito (now nicknamed Peter) Cayetano, obviously to take away votes from Alan Peter Cayetano, arch-nemesis of First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo. If lawyer Oliver Lozano is indeed the architect of this candidacy, without the sanction of the KBL party, he should be disbarred and put behind bars.

—EP DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St.,
Philamlife Village,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City

Questions re Pfizer story

THE FEATURE STORY TITLED "DOING community work, the Pfizer way" (INQUIRER, 2/17/07) is an example of fluff-piece writing and puts in question the INQUIRER's credibility and its claim to balanced news reporting.

Under the banner "Corporate Citizen," the piece about the community work Pfizer is doing may all be well and good. But Pfizer, at this very moment,. is suing to stop the Philippine government from importing and selling cheaper generic medicines. (The medicine prices in the Philippines are among the highest in Asia.)

Pfizer lobbyists reportedly tried to intervene in a congressional vote on the Cheaper Medicine Act (HB No. 6035). The furor that followed only revealed an organization in total disregard of corporate social responsibility.

The INQUIRER piece about Pfizer's community work should have mentioned the continuing legal battle between the Philippine government and that company. Then there would have been some balance. Otherwise, the "feel good" piece appears straight out of a corporate press release and puts the good things Pfizer employees are doing under suspicion. The INQUIRER might as well have told Pfizer to take out an ad and do an advertorial.

—JOHN L. SILVA,
jsilva79@hotmail.com

I take exception to Mr. Silva's assertion that the article was an example of "fluff-piece writing."

First of all, the Corporate Citizen series was conceptualized to highlight big and small companies with programs to help the community. Pfizer is just one of the many companies we have featured over the past two years.

Second, the article, which focused on the volunteer program of Pfizer employees, came out on Feb. 17, days before the incident in Congress.

And lastly, it is unfair to question the motives of the employees who are sincerely out there spending their time and effort to help their fellowmen. Let's say, for the sake of argument, that Pfizer the company is pulling a fast one on the community, it still does not diminish the value of the work put in by the employees who are not paid to do what they are doing. It is that effort that we sought to highlight in the story.

And really, who is putting "the good things Pfizer employees are doing under suspicion"? Certainly not the people and communities they have helped.

—TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

Atienza's double standard

INCUMBENT MANILA MAYOR LITO ATIENZA is using a double standard in dealing with political rallies.

If it's the opposition partisans that hold a rally, it's OK with him so long as they do not march on the streets or hold motorcades.

But if it's the administration allies that hold motorcades and marches, it's OK with him—never mind if they cause heavy traffic, as his public endorsement of Ali Atienza for the mayoral post and his "state of the city address" did. Heavy traffic will be tolerated as long as it is he who is causing it.

—MARK VIÑAS,
manilavigilante@yahoo.com

Overspending vs donating

THE ELECTION CARNIVAL HAS STARTED. Commercials extolling senatorial candidates swamp TV screens all over the country. The candidates are spending millions of pesos for these ads just to sell themselves to the public. I understand that these ads are needed because the candidates can't simply visit every nook and corner of the country.

But come to think of it: Instead of overspending on ads, what if the candidates spend all this money to help their poor countrymen? If they truly want to help the Filipinos, why don't they start now? If they donate their campaign funds now, that will be a far nobler act, and people will know about it and there will be no need to tell them to vote for the donors.

—CINDY HISONA,
cindy_hisona@yahoo.com

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Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

Poor farmers gain from microfinancing

By Niña Catherine Calleja
San Pablo City

BACK IN THE EARLY '80S, "CRAZY" AND "IMPOSsible" were the common impressions of colleagues and funding agencies to Jaime Alip's proposal to establish an institution providing loans to poor farmers.

FIRST CARD Bank in San Pablo City; Alip (inset) CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Alip has proved them wrong. A nongovernment organization he founded in 1986—the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Inc.—has expanded fast to help the landless farmers and ease their poverty.

The institutions of CARD are now giving loans, insurance, training and other services to almost half a million clients.

"Sole financial support is not enough to uplift the status of the poor," he said.

A pioneer of Grameen banking in the country, the CARD-Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD-MRI) has paved the way for microfinancing in the country. It has become successful in helping the poor, especially in the rural areas.

The CARD-MRI has 232 branches, 50 office units, 12 banks, and four head offices all over the country.

As of December last year, the repayment rate remained high at 98.5 percent, Alip said.

Proof of the success of his work is that the clients who were with them for more than 10 years are no longer poor and asset-less. "Many of our borrowers have increased their business activities. They are already employers, generating labor employment in the country," he claimed.

Difficult days

Alip was exposed to the countryside in 1978 when he joined the Philippine Business for Social Progress, a grant-making NGO.

"I had seen the need to prioritize the landless rural workers who were paid by the hour," he said. The poor farmers should be given credit and the opportunity to earn, he said, as most of them have the skills and perseverance.

With other social development practitioners, he started formulating the backbone of the organization in 1986 with only P20 as initial fund and an old typewriter. The group occupied a small office beside the San Pablo public market.

For two years, he submitted proposals to funding agencies. But he said no one believed because development then meant doing charity.

In 1988, two Japanese agencies funded the initial operation of the NGO. He recounted the days he spent in Japan to speak to the heads of the funding agencies.

"I had no money to stay in a hotel. Some of my friends paid for my plane ticket and allowance," he recalled. "So I slept at the airport for three days."

His Japanese friend later found about his ordeal. "Perhaps because of pity, his company accepted my proposal and provided $10,000," he said.

The CARD team immediately started the livelihood assistance program for landless coconut farmers in San Pablo.

In 1989, it tested the solidarity group lending, adopting the Grameen banking scheme.

Alip met Dr. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen movement and 2006 Nobel Peace Prize awardee, during the latter's tour to the Philippines in 1983.

"We had the opportunity to discuss his projects. And, he told me he was giving loans to the poorest among the poor in Bangladesh," Alip said.

"I actually laughed at his idea. I told myself, 'This man was fooling me because Bangladesh is the poorest country in the world, so how can the poorest among the poor pay the loans?'" he said.

During the CARD operation, he was reminded of his encounter with Yunus. He went to Bangladesh in 1988 to witness the actual Grameen movement.

"I was surprised to see that it was really happening in Bangladesh. The poor could really repay loans because of their discipline and creativity," he said.

When he came back to the Philippines, he established a cooperative using the Grameen system, and adopted the scheme fully in 1990.

In December 1995, CARD directors began discussing the transformation of the NGO into a bank to tap the commercial loan market.

CARD obtained from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas the license to operate as a rural bank in San Pablo, with an initial paid-up capital of P5 million in August 1997.

Four of the 13 CARD NGO branches were converted into a CARD bank while the remaining branches continued to operate as NGOs.

CARD became the first microfinance NGO that was transformed into a formal financial intermediary.

"We became one of the models for other microfinance institutions in the country and abroad," he said.

Alip said they continued to challenge the traditional banking.

Owners of the bank and the clients share the profit dividends. Loans are given, not based on any collateral or legally enforceable contracts, but on trust.

A client may also be a shareholder who can become a representative in the board.

Other institutions

Aside from the NGO and the bank, institutions were established to help clients and members.

The CARD Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) was founded in April 1994 to extend financial assistance to its members through death benefits, medical subsidy, pension, and other loan redemption packages.

Alip said the CARD MBA would eventually be registered as a full-blown insurance company as soon as the capitalization requirement was met.

The CARD Business Development Center was established to provide nonfinancial services for clients to establish and expand their businesses.

The clients, together with the center's staff, create business plans, including various components like financial sustainability, research and documentation and technical consultancy.

The center assists the clients in business technology and product development, and link producers to suppliers. It also provides training, technical assistance and consultancy on market access and alternative financing mechanisms.

On the other hand, the CARD-MRI Development Institute was meant to provide nondegree and degree courses to managers, staff and members specializing in microfinance.

"These institutions are interdependent, with one common goal," Alip said.

He revealed that after two years, the CARD-MRI plans to develop and transform its existing structures, i.e., from CARD Rural Bank to CARD Development Bank; CARD NGO to CARD NGO Microfinance; CARD Training Center to CARD Development Institute; and CARD Mutual Benefit Association to CARD Insurance Co.

Student vows to follow path of slain father

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

IF THOSE MERCENARIES THINK the murder of my father would silence us, they are wrong. It only motivated us to further strengthen the people's struggle against antipeople and inhumane activities."

With this, Rojo Pornasdoro, 25, vowed to follow the path in the progressive mass movement which his father, who was slain last year, had pursued.

"I'm used to the dangerous life. My world has since evolved around peasants, workers and the masses in the countryside," Rojo told the INQUIRER.

Rojo, in the third year of an education course at a college in Lucena City, serves as secretary general of the Kabataan party-list group-Quezon chapter.

Rojo's father Nap, a teacher at the Quezon National High School in Lucena, was ambushed on Feb. 27 last year by still unidentified gunmen a few blocks from the campus.

At the time of his death, Pornasdoro was an active member of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, the provincial chair of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, and the coordinator of Bayan Muna party-list group in the city.

The human rights group Karapatan in Quezon pointed to the military as the one responsible for the murder, but officials from the Armed Forces' Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar has denied the accusation.

Police said cases against several suspects in the killing had already been filed.

"The people must be made aware of these attacks by the military. These are clear attempts to curtail our democratic rights and silence our reasonable demands for social justice," Rojo said

Marivie Cabuyao, a family friend and spokesperson of the "Justice for Sir Nap Movement," claimed justice had remained elusive for the slain activist.

"It has been a year since his killing but until now, the perpetrators are still roaming the province. We demand justice. The Melo Commission is useless," she said.

The widow, Elizabeth, said she had submitted her quest for justice for her husband to God.

"I am very positive that our loving and just Lord will not allow such gruesome injustice like this to prevail. I believe that people who claim to love and worship the Lord will help to promote this Christian atmosphere where justice is a very vital ingredient," she said.

The Justice for Sir Nap Movement, composed of activists, friends, students and faculty members of the QNHS, held a liturgical Mass and a short commemoration program for Pornasdoro at the school grandstand on Monday.

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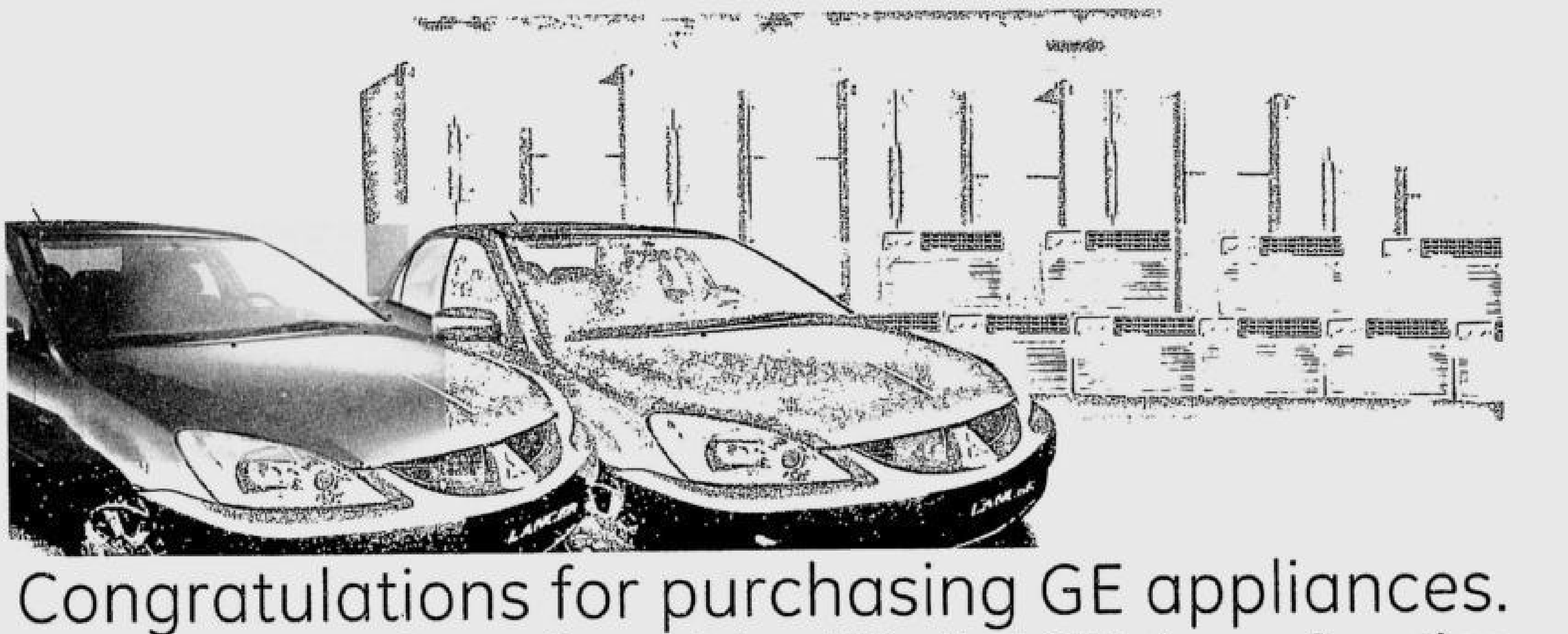

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1,000 cops sent to Abra for poll duty

BAGUIO CITY—AT least 1,000 policemen have been assigned to Abra to maintain peace and order during the election period.

The number is the biggest in the Cordillera, police officials said. Abra has been placed under the watch of the Commission on Elections due to past election-related violent incidents.

According to Senior Supt. Villamor Bumanglag, regional deputy director for operations, Abra is at the top of the PNP list of "areas of immediate concern" during the election period.

Kalinga and Mt. Province are also included, he said.

Bumanglag said the regional police sent 500 policemen each to Kalinga and Mt. Province. Those going to Abra are "more professional and apolitical," he said.

In the 2004 elections, many Abra policemen were proven to be involved in partisan politics, he said. "They were [hired] as private bodyguards of politicians and they were made to campaign and distribute flyers of candidates."

"But this time, we have ordered policemen not to be involved in those activities," he said.

"It is an accepted fact that the image and credibility of the police in Abra have been eroded that even residents do not trust them. But we are correcting that by changing the [composition of the] whole provincial command."

Bumanglag blamed abusive local politicians for the credibility crisis.

Supt. Joseph Adnol, public information officer of the Cordillera police, said Abra policemen had become ineffective and inefficient in their jobs due to political influence.

In January, Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales, regional police chief, relieved several policemen in Abra due to involvement in partisan politics.

The policemen said they had no choice but to follow the orders of local mayors who wanted them to act as their bodyguards.

The most recent political violence to have rocked Abra was the murder of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, who was implicated as alleged mastermind, has denied involvement.

Valera earlier asked the Comelec to put Abra under its control during the election period. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

THERE are no indications of the political tension in Abra, except for these posters condemning the murder of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. that a man in a bicycle passes by. LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

MNLF wants Army exec in attack punished

INDANAN, SULU—THE MORO National Liberation Front (MNLF) has demanded that the military official who ordered the attack on its camp be held liable.

Khaid Adjibun, chair of the MNLF's Lupah Sug State Revolutionary Command, told the INQUIRER that Maj. Gen. Ruperto Pabustan should be held liable for the uncoordinated operation against members of the Abu Sayyaf Group that resulted in a two-hour encounter between MNLF forces and Scout Rangers in Sitio Marang in Barangay Buanza here on Sunday.

"We can't accept the attack by the AFP. We don't know what their objective was," Adjibun said.

Adjibun allowed the INQUIRER and two other journalists to enter his camp, a territory earlier declared a legitimate MNLF camp by NCR Command chief Maj. Gen. Benjamin Muhammad Dolorfino .

The camp has several huts made of light materials and bunkers.

The journalists were shown areas hit by rocket launchers, mortars and howitzers.

The Scout Rangers appeared to have taken the high ground, 100 meters from the MNLF defense at the house of Adjibun.

Just about five meters from the main entrance of Adjibun's hut, an 81 mm mortar fell.

At least 15 craters could be found, indicating that the attackers used high-powered artillery. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

ROUNDUP

Golf for typhoon survivors

THE ROTARY Club of Legazpi Central (RCLC), in cooperation with the Riviera Golf and Country Club (RGCC), held a golf tournament for a cause dubbed Tabang-Buhay (Sagip-Buhay) at the RGCC golf course in Silang, Cavite, on Friday. Proceeds were expected to go to the Tabang-Buhay Rehab and Relief Operations of the RCLC, District 3820, which has been distributing relief goods and materials to far-flung villages of Albay.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 robbers nabbed in Laguna

CALAMBA CITY—Two members of the biggest robbery syndicate involved in payroll and bus robberies in Laguna were arrested at a police checkpoint in Pagsanjan, Laguna, on Tuesday night. Police identified them as Roel Omaña, 37, of Barangay Mayondon, Los Baños, Laguna; and Michael Mortera, 29, of Bambang, Los Baños. The two belonged to the Lapinid Robbery Group whose members are known to victimize buses plying the Laguna-Manila route and employees delivering payroll. The group's alleged leader, former PO2 Andrew Lapinid, is still at large.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Lucena's most wanted slain

LUCENA CITY—The most wanted criminal in this city was killed in a gunfight on Feb. 21. Supt. Nelson Lequin, city police officer in charge, identified the suspect as one Jessie Morales, 22, alleged head of the Morales Gang, a criminal group operating in this city and neighboring towns. Police found Morales on a tip. Morales suffered bullet wounds in the body.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Teacher beats student

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police have filed child abuse charges against a teacher in Barangay Sto. Niño, San Vicente town in Palawan, for allegedly beating her female Grade 1 pupil on Feb. 16. Chief Supt. Napoleon Cachuela, regional police director, identified the suspect as Elma Pactao, 46, teacher of the Sto. Niño Elementary School and resident of the barangay. Police said that at around 10 a.m., Pactao was conducting a lecture when she got angry and beat up the 8-year-old pupil, who failed to answer questions on the blackboard.

Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Robbery gang strikes again

LUCENA CITY—The Bonnet Gang in Quezon province robbed and wounded an elderly man and sexually abused a high school student. A police report said five armed suspects, all wearing dark bonnets, forcibly entered a house in Barangay Cabuyao, Padre Burgos town, at around 8 p.m. on Feb. 22. One of the occupants, Melba Agripa, was able to sneak out and call her husband, Alfredo, for help. When Alfredo entered the house, the suspects shot him in the back and abdomen, and tied his hands. The gangsters took P6,000 in cash, P50,000 worth of jewelry and a Nokia cell phone. They took with them the 14-year-old granddaughter of the victim. Police said the teenager was sexually abused before she was released three hours later.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

New Capiz police chief

ROXAS CITY—The new director of the provincial police assumed office on Feb. 22 following a turnover of command held at Camp Teodorico Apil in Barangay Lanot here. Senior Supt. Roberto Villanueva replaced Senior Supt. Co Yee M. Co Jr. as police director of Capiz. Co assumed office on Jan. 12 as officer in charge, replacing Senior Supt. Cipriano Querol. Co will assume the post of chief of investigation and detection division of the Western Visayas regional police office. Villanueva is a native of Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas

3 hurt in Catbalogan blast

TACLOBAN CITY—Three people were injured when a grenade lobbed by one of two motorcycle-riding men exploded at 10 p.m. on Feb. 22 in Catbalogan, Samar. SPO4 Eduardo Villanueva of the Catbalogan police identified the victims as Michael Reloquio, 31; Aloha Uy, 34; and Martin Alejan, 31. Witnesses brought the victims to the Samar Provincial Hospital where doctors declared them out of danger, Villanueva said. Police said the attack happened while Reloquio and Uy were standing just outside Reloquio's house on Del Rosario Street, a residential-commercial area in Samar's capital town of Catbalogan.

Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

SCOUTS FOR PEACE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Officials of the Cebu Council of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, headed by council chair Hernando Streegan, Eastern Visayas regional chair Arturo Umbac and regional director Alexander Kong III raise a segment of the three-piece baton that arrived in Cebu for a relay.

ROADSIDE SNACK YN RILLON
Senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay takes a break from a sortie in Pangasinan for a "halo-halo" with children for whom he bought the snacks.

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DEVOTION TONEE DESPOJO/CEBU DAILY NEWS
Devotees enter the monastery of the Marian Monks of Eucharistic in Sibunga town in southern Cebu.

Bayan Muna to sue military, 2 accusers

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—THE PARTY-LIST group Bayan Muna said it would sue the Armed Forces of the Philippines and two women who sought its disqualification from the election for party-list groups.

"We have a clear case here as the Armed Forces is violating the Election Code," Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said in a visit here yesterday.

According to Ocampo, some units of the military have started campaigning against the leftist group.

"Even the statement of (AFP Chief of Staff) Esperon supporting (retired general Jovito) Palparan's plan to run for Congress is questionable. The military should not endorse candidates or party lists or by any means discredit them," he said.

Bayan Muna is preparing to file a perjury case against the two widows of former rebels.

"We have not violated provisions in the Constitution and we have evidence to disprove the false statement of the two complainants," he said.

The two have accused five leftist party-list legislators—Satur Ocampo and Teodoro Casiño of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano and Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza of Gabriela—of murder for the lawmakers' alleged roles in the killing of their husbands.

In the affidavit, the two also accused the partly-list group of harassing Akbayan members in the 1998 elections.

Ocampo said the allegations were baseless and not factual. "It is clear they are backed by the military which consistently aims to stop our party from winning in the elections." *Niña Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Benguet veggie leaders seek more protection

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—A PROVINCIAL official has asked the government to insist on pushing the adoption of trade protection measures on local agricultural products when the World Trade Organization (WTO) resumes talks on trade barriers.

Board Member John Kim said lowering the guard on trade restrictions would make the local vegetable industry fall into the mercy of cheap imported vegetables.

Kim, chair of the agriculture committee, said the use of special products (SPs) and a special safeguard mechanism (SSM) as trade measures would level the playing field against subsidy-supported vegetables from developed countries.

"I hope the President (Macapagal-Arroyo) did not soften up on the stand of the G33 (a group of developing countries that pushed the adoption of the trade mechanisms) that the SPs and the SSM should remain," he said.

Kim was afraid that Ms Arroyo, trade and agricultural officials might have talked about trade concessions when they met WTO Director General Pascal Lamy recently.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap was quoted as saying that Lamy visited Ms Arroyo in a bid to achieve a consensus among WTO member-countries on resuming trade negotiations that collapsed in July last year.

Kim, who attended the WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December 2005, said Lamy's arrival could have been intended to convince Ms Arroyo to give up the SPs and SSM.

The Philippines and Indonesia, Kim said, are pillars of the G33.

The SPs and SSM, which were adopted as official trade positions among G33 members, would allow developing countries to reduce, at their own pace, tariffs on sensitive agricultural products that would be adversely affected under a free trade system.

An agriculture product is considered "sensitive" based on its importance to food and livelihood security.

Potatoes, carrots and tomatoes are officially listed as "sensitive products," Kim said.

He said the provincial board passed last year a resolution asking for the inclusion in the list of five other highland crops—broccoli, lettuce, strawberry, celery and cabbage. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Bets told: Break silence on murders

MILITANT GROUPS DARED SENATORIAL candidates from the administration and the opposition to break their silence on the spate of extrajudicial killings of left-wing activists and journalists across the country.

"Their silence puzzles us a lot. Everybody is denouncing this state-sponsored terrorism, but the senatorial wannabes in the May 14, 2007 elections are not keen to take this up," the Anakpawis and the Pamalakaya groups said in a joint statement furnished the INQUIRER.

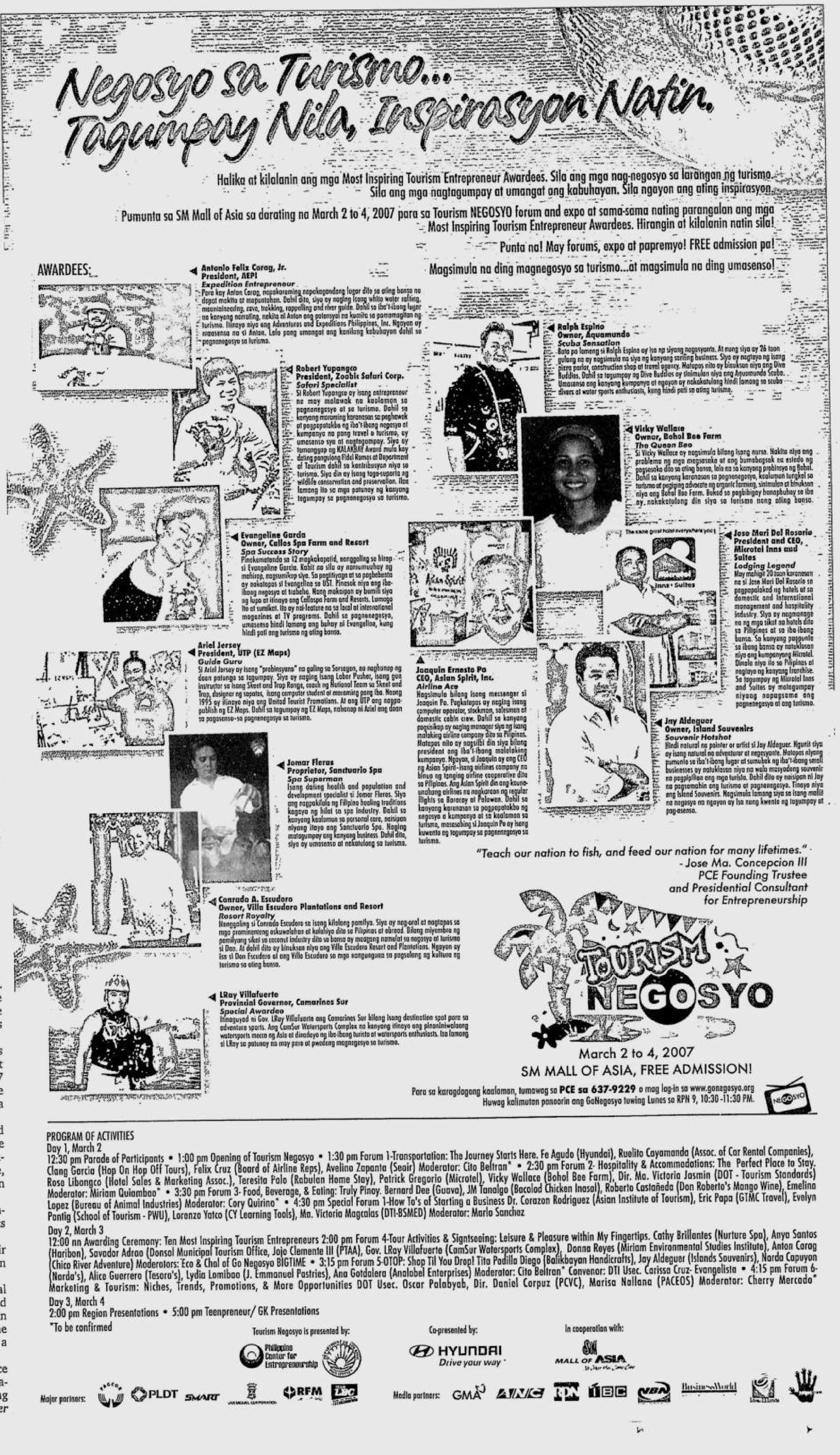
Fernando Hicap, Anakpawis nominee and Pamalakaya national chair, said only House Minority Floor Leader Francis Escudero, Genuine Opposition (GO) senatorial candidate, openly denounced the Arroyo administration for the killings.

The rest of the candidates from the administration-backed Team Unity and GO tickets ignored the issue, Hicap said.

The militant leader said that as far as their groups were concerned, the murders were an election issue.

"It is a national issue that every electoral candidate should take a definite stand on and it would be used as one of the yardsticks on whether to support or junk candidates in the May 14, 2007 elections," Hicap said in a phone interview.

Hicap warned that the continuing silence of senatorial candidates on the issue of extrajudicial killings was tantamount to condoning the murders. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*



Negosyo sa Turismo... Tagumpay Nila, Inspirasyon Natin.

Halika at kilalanin ang mga Most Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneur Awardees. Sila ang mga nag-negosyo sa larangan ng turismo. Sila ang mga nagtagumpay at umangat ang kabuhayan. Sila ngayon ang ating inspirasyon.

Pumunta sa SM Mall of Asia sa darating na March 2 to 4, 2007 para sa Tourism NEGOSYO forum and expo at sama-sama nating parangalan ang mga Most Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneur Awardees. Hirangin at kilalanin natin sila!

Punta na! May forums, expo at papremyo! FREE admission pa!

Magsimula na ding magnegosyo sa turismo...at magsimula na ding umasenso!

AWARDEES:

Antonio Felix Carag, Jr.
President, AEPI
Expedition Entrepreneur
Para kay Anton Carag, napakaraming napakagandang lugar dito sa ating bansa na dapat makita at mapuntahan. Dahil dito, siya ay naging isang white water rafting, mountaineering, cave, trekking, rappelling and river guide. Dahil sa iba't-ibang lugar na kanyang narating, nakita ni Anton ang potensyal na kumita sa pamamagitan ng turismo. Itinayo niya ang Adventures and Expeditions Philippines, Inc. Ngayon ay maasenso na si Anton. Lalo pang umangat ang kanilang kabuhayan dahil sa pagnenegosyo sa turismo.

Robert Yupangco
President, Zoobic Safari Corp.
Safari Specialist
Si Robert Yupangco ay isang entrepreneur na may malawak na kaalaman sa pagnenegosyo at sa turismo. Dahil sa kanyang maraming karanasan sa paghawak at pagpapatakbo ng iba't-ibang negosyo at kumpanya na pang travel o turismo, ay umasenso sya at nagtagumpay. Siya ay tumanggap ng KALAKBAY Award mula kay dating pangulong Fidel Ramos at Department of Tourism dahil sa kontribusyon niya sa turismo. Siya din ay isang taga-suporta ng wildlife conservation and preservation. Ilan lamang ito sa mga patunay ng kanyang tagumpay sa pagnenegosyo sa turismo.

Ralph Espino
Owner, Aquamundo
Scuba Sensation
Bata pa lamang si Ralph Espino ay isa na siyang negosyante. At nung siya ay 26 taon gulang na ay nagsimula na siya ng kanyang sariling business. Siya ay nagtayo ng isang pizza parlor, construction shop at travel agency. Matapos nito ay binuksan niya ang Dive Buddies. Dahil sa tagumpay ng Dive Buddies ay sinimulan niya ang Aquamundo Scuba. Umasenso ang kanyang kumpanya at ngayon ay nakakatulong hindi lamang sa scuba divers at water sports enthusiasts, kung hindi pati sa ating turismo.

Vicky Wallace
Owner, Bohol Bee Farm
The Queen Bee
Si Vicky Wallace ay nagsimula bilang isang nurse. Nakita niya ang problema ng mga magsasaka at ang bumabagsak na estado ng pagsasaka dito sa ating bansa, lalo na sa kanyang probinsya ng Bohol. Dahil sa kanyang karanasan sa pagnenegosyo, kaalaman tungkol sa turismo at pagiging advocate ng organic farming, sinimulan at binuksan niya ang Bohol Bee Farm. Bukod sa pagbibigay hanapbuhay sa iba ay nakakatulong din siya sa turismo nang ating bansa.

Evangeline Garcia
Owner, Callos Spa Farm and Resort
Spa Success Story
Pinakamatanda sa 12 magkakapatid, nanggaling sa hirap si Evangeline Garcia. Kahit na sila ay namumuhay ng mahirap, nagsumikap siya. Sa pagtitiyaga at sa pagbebenta ay nakatapos si Evangeline sa UST. Pinasok niya ang iba-ibang negosyo at trabaho. Nang makaipon ay bumili siya ng lupa at itinayo ang Callospa Farms and Resorts. Lumago ito at sumikat. Ito ay nai-feature na sa local at international magazines at TV programs. Dahil sa pagnenegosyo, umasenso hindi lamang ang buhay ni Evangeline, kung hindi pati ang turismo ng ating bansa.

Jose Mari Del Rosario
President and CEO, Microtel Inns and Suites
Lodging Legend
May mahigit 20 taon karanasan na si Jose Mari Del Rosario sa pagpapalakad ng hotels at sa domestic and international management and hospitality industry. Siya ay nagmanage na ng mga sikat na hotels dito sa Pilipinas at sa iba-ibang bansa. Sa kanyang pagpunta sa ibang bansa ay natuklasan niya ang kumpanyang Microtel. Dinala niya ito sa Pilipinas at nagtayo ng kanyang franchise. Sa tagumpay ng Microtel Inns and Suites ay matagumpay niyang napagsama ang pagnenegosyo at ang turismo.

Ariel Jersey
President, UTP (EZ Maps)
Guide Guru
Si Ariel Jersey ay isang "probinsyano" na galing sa Sorsogon, na naghanap ng daan patungo sa tagumpay. Siya ay naging isang Labor Pusher, isang gun instructor sa isang Skeet and Trap Range, coach ng National Team sa Skeet and Trap, designer ng sapatos, isang computer student at marami pang iba. Noong 1995 ay itinayo niya ang United Tourist Promotions. At ang UTP ang nagpa-publish ng EZ Maps. Dahil sa tagumpay ng EZ Maps, nahanap ni Ariel ang daan sa pagasenso-sa pagnenegosyo sa turismo.

Joaquin Ernesto Po
CEO, Asian Spirit, Inc.
Airline Ace
Nagsimula bilang isang messenger si Joaquin Po. Pagkatapos ay naging isang computer operator, stockman, salesman at domestic cabin crew. Dahil sa kanyang pagsisikap ay naging manager siya ng isang malaking airline company dito sa Pilipinas. Matapos nito ay nagsilbi din siya bilang president ang iba't-ibang malalaking kumpanya. Ngayon, si Joaquin ay ang CEO ng Asian Spirit- isang airlines company na binuo ng tanging airline cooperative dito sa Pilipinas. Ang Asian Spirit din ang kauna-unahang airlines na nagkaroon ng regular flights sa Boracay at Palawan. Dahil sa kanyang karanasan sa pagpapatakbo ng negosyo o kumpanya at sa kaalaman sa turismo, masasabing si Joaquin Po ay isang kwento ng tagumpay sa pagnenegosyo sa turismo.

Jay Aldeguer
Owner, Island Souvenirs
Souvenir Hotshot
Hindi natural na painter or artist si Jay Aldeguer. Ngunit siya ay isang natural na adventurer at negosyante. Matapos niyang pumunta sa iba't-ibang lugar at sumubok ng iba't-ibang small businesses ay natuklasan niya na wala masyadong souvenir na pagpipilian ang mga turista. Dahil dito ay naisipan ni Jay na pagsamahin ang turismo at pagnenegosyo. Tinayo niya ang Island Souvenirs. Nagsimula lamang siya sa isang maliit na negosyo na ngayon ay isa nang kwento ng tagumpay at pag-asenso.

Jomar Fleras
Proprietor, Sanctuario Spa
Spa Superman
Isang dating health and population and development specialist si Jomar Fleras. Siya ang nagpakilala ng Filipino healing traditions kagaya ng hilot sa spa industry. Dahil sa kanyang kaalaman sa personal care, naisipan niyang itayo ang Sanctuario Spa. Naging matagumpay ang kanyang business. Dahil dito, siya ay umasenso at nakatulong sa turismo.

Conrado A. Escudero
Owner, Villa Escudero Plantations and Resort
Resort Royalty
Nanggaling si Conrado Escudero sa isang kilalang pamilya. Siya ay nag-aral at nagtapos sa mga prominenteng eskuwelahan at kolehiyo dito sa Pilipinas at abroad. Bilang miyembro ng pamilyang sikat sa coconut industry dito sa bansa ay maagang namulat sa negosyo at turismo si Don. At dahil dito ay binuksan niya ang Villa Escudero Resort and Plantations. Ngayon ay isa si Don Escudero at ang Villa Escudero sa mga nangunguna sa pagsulong ng kultura ng turismo sa ating bansa.

LRay Villafuerte
Provincial Governor, Camarines Sur
Special Awardee
Itinaguyod ni Gov. LRay Villafuerte ang Camarines Sur bilang isang destination spot para sa adventure sports. Ang CamSur Watersports Complex na kanyang itinayo ang pinaniniwalaang watersports mecca ng Asia at dinadayo ng iba-ibang turista at watersports enthusiasts. Isa lamang si LRay sa patunay na may pera at pwedeng magnegosyo sa turismo.

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- Jose Ma. Concepcion III
PCE Founding Trustee
and Presidential Consultant
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Huwag kalimutan panoorin ang GoNegosyo tuwing Lunes sa RPN 9, 10:30 -11:30 PM.

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES
Day 1, March 2
12:30 pm Parade of Participants • 1:00 pm Opening of Tourism Negosyo • 1:30 pm Forum 1-Transportation: The Journey Starts Here. Fe Agudo (Hyundai), Ruelito Cayamanda (Assoc. of Car Rental Companies), Clang Garcia (Hop On Hop Off Tours), Felix Cruz (Board of Airline Reps), Avelino Zapanta (Seair) Moderator: Cito Beltran* • 2:30 pm Forum 2- Hospitality & Accommodations: The Perfect Place to Stay. Rosa Libongco (Hotel Sales & Marketing Assoc.), Teresita Palo (Rabulan Home Stay), Patrick Gregorio (Microtel), Vicky Wallace (Bohol Bee Farm), Dir. Ma. Victoria Jasmin (DOT - Tourism Standards) Moderator: Miriam Quiamboo* • 3:30 pm Forum 3- Food, Beverage, & Eating: Truly Pinoy. Bernard Dee (Guava), JM Tanalgo (Bacolod Chicken Inasal), Roberto Castañeda (Don Roberto's Mango Wine), Emelina Lopez (Bureau of Animal Industries) Moderator: Cory Quirino* • 4:30 pm Special Forum 1-How To's of Starting a Business Dr. Corazon Rodriguez (Asian Institute of Tourism), Eric Papa (GTMC Travel), Evelyn Pantig (School of Tourism - PWU), Lorenzo Yatco (CY Learning Tools), Ma. Victoria Magcalas (DTI-BSMED) Moderator: Marlo Sanchez
Day 2, March 3
12:00 nn Awarding Ceremony: Ten Most Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneurs 2:00 pm Forum 4-Tour Activities & Signtseeing: Leisure & Pleasure within My Fingertips. Cathy Brillantes (Nurture Spa), Anya Santos (Haribon), Savador Adrao (Donsol Municipal Tourism Office, Jojo Clemente III (PTAA), Gov. LRay Villafuerte (CamSur Watersports Complex), Donna Reyes (Miriam Environmental Studies Institute), Anton Carag (Chico River Adventure) Moderators: Eco & Chal of Go Negosyo BIGTIME • 3:15 pm Forum 5-OTOP: Shop Til You Drop! Tita Padilla Diego (Balikbayan Handicrafts), Jay Aldeguer (Islands Souvenirs), Narda Capuyon (Narda's), Alice Guerrero (Tesoro's), Lydia Lomibao (J. Emmanuel Pastries), Ana Gotdalera (Analobel Enterprises) Moderator: Cito Beltran* Convenor: DTI Usec. Carissa Cruz- Evangelista • 4:15 pm Forum 6-Marketing & Tourism: Niches, Trends, Promotions, & More Opportunities DOT Usec. Oscar Palabyab, Dir. Daniel Corpuz (PCVC), Marisa Nallana (PACEOS) Moderator: Cherry Mercado*
Day 3, March 4
2:00 pm Region Presentations • 5:00 pm Teenpreneur/ GK Presentations
*To be confirmed

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Querubin taken to Ft. Boni hospital

By Christine O. Avendaño

DETAINED MARINE COL. ARIEL QUERUBIN WAS TRANSferred to the Army hospital inside Fort Bonifacio yesterday where he will stay until he is completely treated for malaria and other ailments.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said that Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., approved the transfer of Querubin to the Fort Bonifacio General Hospital so the latter could "follow up medical treatment."

"He (Querubin) will stay there until such time that he finishes his treatment," Bacarro told reporters. Querubin was transferred to Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal a day earlier.

Querubin suffered a recurrence of malaria in December last year, an ailment that first afflicted him in the '80s.

His wife Mariaflor said that Querubin was actually taking an "alternative treatment" for malaria and other ailments at a Makati City clinic and was just staying at the Army hospital in Fort Bonifacio.

In a phone interview, she said her husband would just need another week of treatment at a Makati City clinic, which she did not identify.

From Fort Bonifacio, Querubin was transferred the other day with the rest of the Marine officers to the AFP Joint Task Group Custodial in Camp Capinpin, joining the Scout Rangers who were implicated with them in last year's alleged coup attempt.

Military officials said the transfer to Camp Capinpin would make it easier for the remaining 28 accused military officers to attend the court martial proceedings against them as this was being held within the camp premises.

Bacarro also assured that the conditions in Camp Capinpin were "livable," contrary to reports that the military officers were staying at quarters there whose living conditions were "worse than the Manila city jail."

"I am sure those who are saying those things had no idea of what the facility looks like," he said.

Saying he had seen the place himself, Bacarro said the facility, which was put up in December last year, used to serve as barracks for soldiers but had since been improved.

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, he said, had inspected the facility and made recommendations for its improvement which the AFP complied with.

He said the International Red Cross also made similar recommendations for the facility's improvement such as an infirmary.

"One thing is definite, this facility has been inspected, and we can say that it would have passed very stringent requirements of the Red Cross," he said.

"We would like to assure you that we will not treat our fellow officers in that manner, meaning to say, we will treat them well," he said.

Power rate cuts no poll gimmickry, says Palace

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EDGARDO ERMITA concedes that the timely announcement of a power rate reduction would boost the chances of the administration's senatorial candidates but denies that it was a political gimmick.

"Some people will give their own interpretation, they will say this was meant to make Team Unity appear good to the people. Such is the nature of politics. We try to think of things that will benefit us and set aside things that might not be beneficial to us, especially during the election period," Ermita said.

The opposition questioned the timing of the announcement of the reduction, saying Malacañang was engaging in electioneering.

Ermita said that the power cut would not be a welcome development to the opposition as it would help Team Unity.

No gimmickry

"But you can be sure this is not political gimmickry. The administration is just trying to display its capacity to continue undertaking measures that will help alleviate the conditions of our people," he said.

The state energy regulator announced on Tuesday that it had ordered the National Power Corp., the state power generator, to reduce its rates by 4.3 centavos in Luzon, 31.5 centavos in the Visayas and 0.45 centavos in Mindanao. In Luzon, this will mean a decrease of P2 (not P4.30 as reported earlier) in the monthly bill of a household consuming 100 kWh.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday used the announcement of the power rate cut as an occasion to endorse the Team Unity senatorial candidates and ask the people to focus on the economy.

In a statement released yesterday, the President said the Napocor rate reduction was "part of the great story of economic gains flowing down to the people" and the fruits of "fiscal discipline and good governance."

Destructive politics

"This is a clear and compelling reason for all of us to stay the course we have begun and not be distracted by the pullback of destructive politics," she said.

"Our candidates in Team Unity are keeping the campaign at a high level because this is the only way we can continue to advance and maintain the gains of our economy while elevating the sheen of Philippine democracy to the world," Ms Arroyo said.

Though she has vowed to stay on the sidelines of the May 14 senatorial elections to concentrate on governance, she indirectly addressed the attacks on her administration and its senatorial slate.

"While our detractors can continue to scrape the bottom of the barrel for old, worn-out issues, we are concerned with the issue of a modern Philippines fighting for the people and lifting them from poverty," she said.

Bury the past

"I call on all Filipinos to bury past complaints and join the bandwagon of the economy. This is our only time to break free from the drag of past complaints and move forward," she said.

"Let us not waste time but use it to grab every opportunity to advance, prevail over our conflicts and doubts, and win the future," she said.

In Iloilo City, Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate John Osmeña yesterday said the power rates cut was a "grand deception."

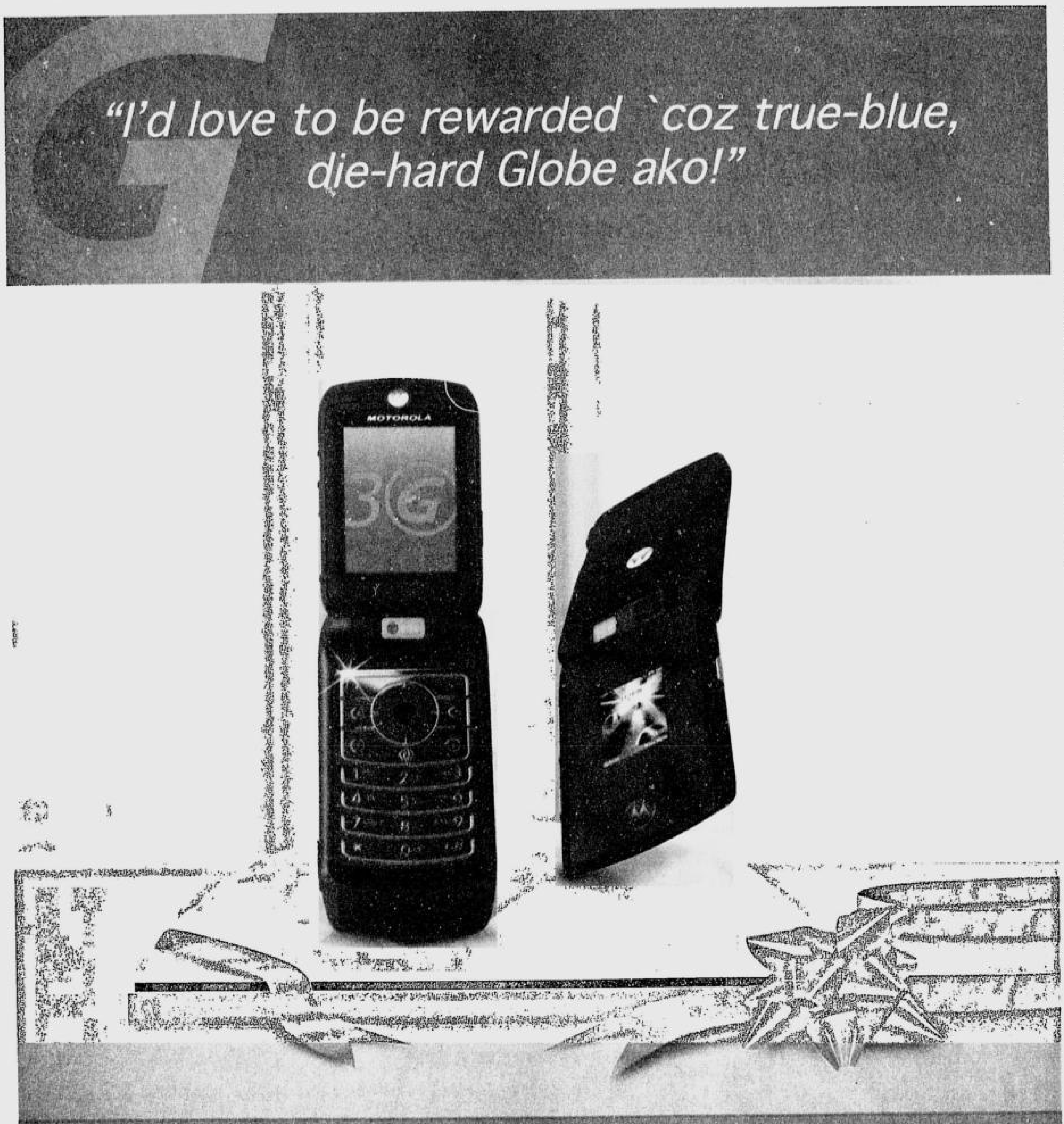
He said the amount of the cut should be higher because of the improving value of the peso against the US dollar.

"Instead of lowering [electricity rates] now by a few centavos, we should lower them by two to three pesos," Osmeña said.

"So my question is, who is pocketing the difference? The oil companies now making tons of money that is the result of the lowering of the exchange rate," Osmeña said.

Loren Legarda, another GO candidate, welcomed the rate reduction because it was a "positive development for the people."

"I welcome it regardless of the motive. Besides, the people will be able to see through it," she said. *Juliet Labog-Javellana and Norman Bordadora*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Calixto charged for taking over office

Mayor, vice mayor's posts in Pasay City not vacant, says lawyer

By Julie M. Aurelio

PASAY MAYOR ALLAN PANALIGAN JUMPED the gun on dismissed Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto when he filed charges of usurpation of authority against the latter on Tuesday.

Panaligan filed the complaint jointly with Vice Mayor Arvin Tolentino in the City Prosecutor's Office, several days after the Court of Appeals directed the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to stop implementing an order dismissing Calixto from government service.

Armed with the court order, Calixto has returned twice since last week to City Hall to get back his old post and to assume the position of acting mayor. When he failed, he repeatedly vowed to file contempt charges against Panaligan and "those who refused to let me inside the City Hall and let me assume my duties."

Calixto and then Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad were suspended last September on graft charges. They were replaced temporarily by Panaligan and Tolentino who were later sworn in by the DILG in a permanent capacity when the Ombudsman ordered Calixto and Trinidad's dismissal from the service.

In their complaint, Panaligan and Tolentino charged Calixto with violating Articles 177 (usurpation of authority) and 236 (anticipation of duties of public office) under the Revised Penal Code.

Joseph Castillo, Panaligan's lawyer said their action was based on Calixto's issuance of "a memorandum coded 001 informing our department heads that he is now the vice mayor and acting mayor of Pasay."

"In issuing an order to the department heads without being lawfully entitled to do so, he is usurping the power, authority and official functions vested upon us as the lawfully constituted city mayor and vice mayor of Pasay," the joint complaint read.

Castillo added that the former vice mayor's takeover of the Office of Senior Citizens' Affairs (Osca) also falls under the charge of usurpation of authority.

After being denied entry to City Hall last Monday, Calixto went to the Osca and told reporters that he would temporarily hold office there.

"He cannot just assume the position of acting mayor just like that," Castillo said. "The posts of mayor and vice mayor are not vacant, and he cannot cite section 46 of the Local Government Code for (his takeover)." Section 46 states that if the local chief executive is temporarily incapacitated and unable to perform his duties, the next in line shall automatically exercise the former's powers, except the power to appoint, suspend or dismiss employees.

LEO VILLAN, the publisher of a tabloid, was found guilty of libel yesterday. He insists that he was framed. RYAN LIM

Publisher gets 2-year jail term for libel

By Allison W. Lopez

THE PUBLISHER OF A TABLOID WAS CONVICTED on libel charges yesterday and sentenced to serve a maximum of two years in prison.

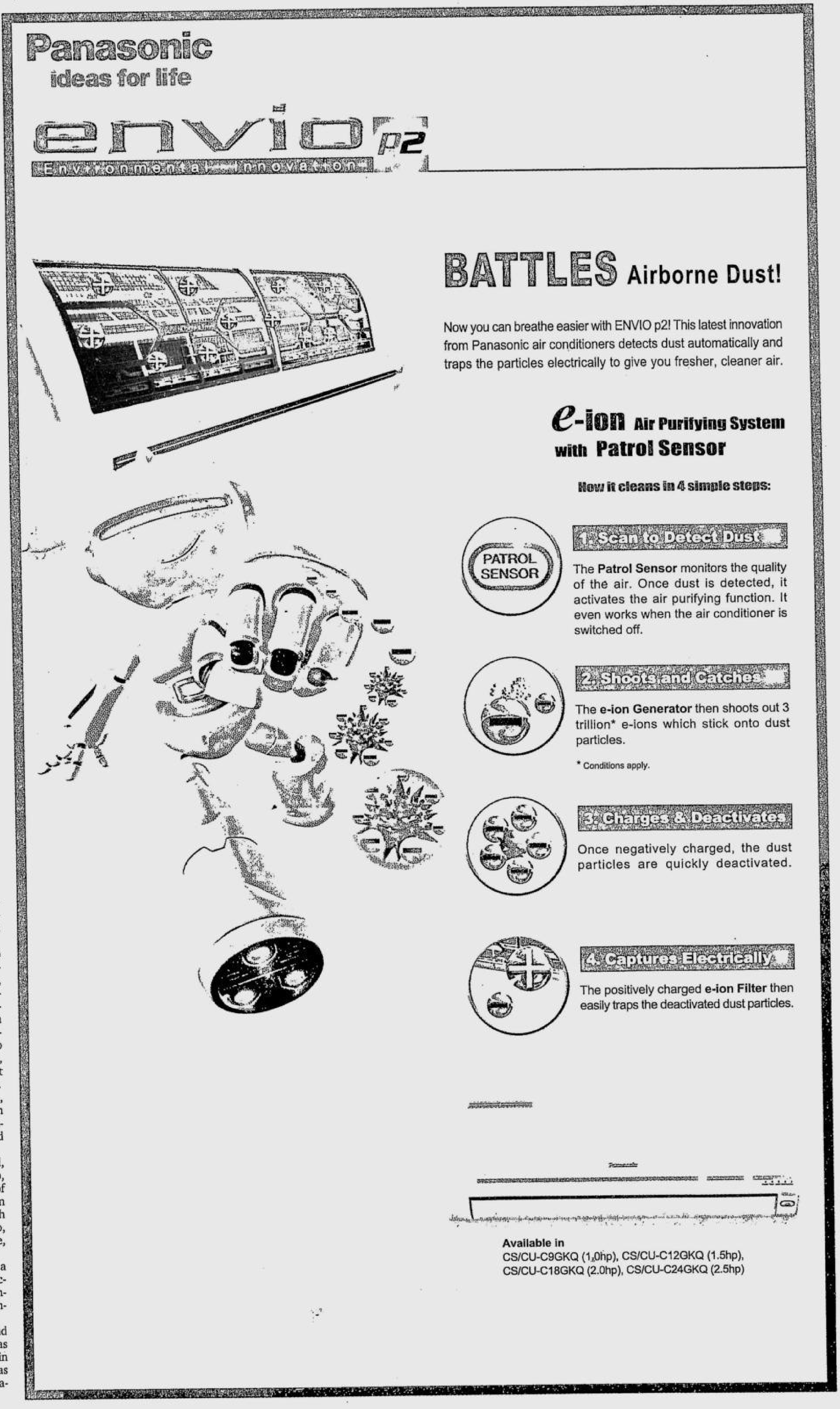
Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. of Branch 26 also ordered Leo Villan, publisher and president of the tabloid, "People's Brigada," to pay P10 million in damages to Efraim Genuino, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. chair, and P20,000 in legal fees. Villan's coaccused, managing editor Nestorio Ibanez and editor in chief Zandro Peralta, remain at large. An alias warrant, however, has been issued so the case against them may be revived should they be arrested.

Court records showed that on Sept. 11, 2002, Villan asked Genuino for P2 million in exchange for not publishing derogatory articles against him. Genuino, however, refused to give in to Villan's demand.

The following day, an open letter titled, "Pagcor chairman and CEO Efraim Genuino, resign now!" came out on the front page of Villan's paper. The letter, supposedly written by Pagcor employees and signed by Randolph Subiri of Pagcor Holiday Inn Casino Filipino, accused Genuino of gross incompetence, nepotism, graft and corruption.

The strongest evidence against Villan was a sheet of paper bearing his name and bank account number, written in his own hand. Genuino's lawyer, Jojo Allado, said they confirmed that the account belonged to Villan.

Villan, meanwhile, denied the charges and told reporters after the hearing that he was framed. The judge said it was the first time in Philippine court history that a media man was proven guilty of libel with extortion as the basis for the element of malice.



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2 women found dead in Tondo house; suicide angle eyed

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA POLICEMEN ARE STILL PUZZLED over what appeared to be a "suicide pact" between a pregnant bank employee and a nursing student, who were found dead in Manila Tuesday night.

Investigators were carefully sifting through the evidence in the death of Kaycie Caringal, 20, a bank employee, of No. 1284 Sto.Cristo St.; and Gretchen Sangalang, 20, a nursing student, of No. 1785 Yangco corner Francisco Streets, in Tondo.

Caringal bore a gunshot wound in the forehead while Sangalang sustained a bullet wound in the right temple.

Although police found suicide notes at the crime scene, they did not discount foul play. They said they were also looking at the angle that the victims had "a relationship." Caringal apparently was having problems because she was pregnant and that her boyfriend wouldn't take responsibility, police said.

Chief Inspector Alejandro Yanquiling Jr., chief of Manila Police District–Homicide Division, said they would have the suicide notes examined and compare these with the victims' handwriting specimens. He added that the "crime scene appeared to be contaminated, disturbed and could have been staged."

Yanquiling noted that the room was in total disarray and some magazines covered the .32 caliber improvised gun allegedly used in the suicide and found beside Sangalang's body.

"We also noticed that Sangalang's head was leaning on the right side. Since the entry wound was on the right temple, the impact would have made her head lean on the left. The position of her head could be an indication that somebody perhaps checked her pulse to see if she was still alive," the police official added.

An investigation showed that the victims, who were the best of friends as claimed by relatives, arrived around 3 p.m. at Sangalang's house and locked themselves inside the latter's room on the second floor.

Two hours later, Dr. Celia Segismundo and Luis Gabriel Miraflor, Caringal's guardian and boyfriend, respectively, arrived.

After forcibly opening the room when no one answered, they saw the victims' bodies, both clad in black, lying beside each other on the floor.

DID YOU KNOW

THE MANILA Grand Opera House in Sta. Cruz, Manila is one of the several landmarks in the city that has disappeared over the years. The opera house was where the first Philippine Assembly was inaugurated in 1907 by then US Secretary of War William Howard Taft. It was also where the first locally made film, "La Vida de Rizal (The Life of Rizal)," was shown in 1912. The opera house burned down during the war. It was later reconstructed, but was driven out of business as television and cinema became the more popular forms of entertainment.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

2nd Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance
TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting
12 February 2007, Monday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City, Metro Manila

Resolution No. 2007 – 09

(Page 1 of 2 pages)

AMENDING TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD SERVICES NCII TO INCLUDE PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT AS METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR HS NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2005-10 Approving and Promulgating the Training Regulations for Household Services NCII was approved by the TESDA Board during the 46th TESDA Board Meeting which was held last 19 May 2005;

WHEREAS, TESDA recognizes and support, the principles of Competency-Based Training, Assessment and Certification and Recognition of Prior Learning;

WHEREAS, there is a need to support and address the issue that returning household service workers need not undergo the usual assessment process because of their accumulated experiences working overseas as household workers;

WHEREAS, with the inclusion of the portfolio method of assessment, experienced household workers would be able to facilitate and fast-track processing of their papers in the event of immediate hiring for employment;

WHEREAS, in order to establish acceptable and updated Training Regulations for Household Services NCII, an amendment to the Methods of Assessment under the Evidence Guide for all core units of competency is hereby made to include Portfolio Assessment;

WHEREAS, during the 2nd Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, the members of the SSSD and Finance Committee – TESDA Board favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the Board the amendment of Section 3 of BR No. 2005-10 of Training Regulations Household Services NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board approves the amendment of Training Regulations for Household Services NCII to include Portfolio assessment as a Method of Assessment for HS NCII

BE IT RESOLVED FURTHER,

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of the resolution be published and disseminated to all concerned.

Adopted by Referendum this 12th day of February 2007

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–March 1 & 2, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

2nd Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance
TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting
12 February 2007, Monday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City, Metro Manila

Resolution No. 2007 – 08

(Page 1 of 2 pages)

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE PROVISIONAL ASSESSMENT FEES FOR HOUSEHOLD SERVICES NC II

WHEREAS, Section 8, paragraph 9 of Republic Act No. 7796 or the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994 empowers the TESDA Board to "exact reasonable fees and charges for such tests and training conducted and retain such earnings for its own use, subject to guidelines promulgated by the Authority."

WHEREAS, in the 46th TESDA Board Meeting held 19 May 2005 the TESDA Board members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-07 "The Adoption of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification System;

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification Systems provides that "Assessment fees shall be based on the cost of supplies and materials as well as administrative expenses including assessor's honoraria, power and utilities depreciation and maintenance costs. Assessment Fees shall be subject to change to allow for any possible adjustments due to costs increases";

WHEREAS, in the 48th TESDA Board Meeting held 10 November 2005 the TESDA Board members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-18 "Approving the Provisional Assessment Fees by Qualification", (45 qualifications) for a period of six (6) months subject to evaluation of its pilot implementation and submission of its findings and recommendations;

WHEREAS, in the 54th TESDA Board Meeting held 16 January 2007 the TESDA Board considered and approved BR No. 2007-02 "Approving the extension of provisional assessment fees for the forty five (45) Qualifications based on the previously approved BR No. 2005-18 for a period of six (6) months subject to review and evaluation;

WHEREAS, during the Second Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board – TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting held on 12 February 2007 the members of the SSSD and Finance Committee – TESDA Board favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the Board the adjustment to the provisional assessment fee for Household Services NCII from Php1,000.00 to Php900.00 for performance assessment and P100.00 for portfolio assessment and P100.00 certification fee:

- ➤ **Performance assessment = PhP 900.00**
  - Supplies & materials – Php 300.00
  - Power, utilities, etc. – Php 100.00
  - Assessors fee – Php 250.00
  - Technical and Admin. Cost – Php 200.00
  - Equipment depreciation – Php 50.00
- ➤ **Portfolio assessment = PhP 100.00**
  - Assessors fee – Php 75.00
  - Assessment Center – Php 25.00
- ➤ Certification fee of **PhP100.00** (both for performance and portfolio assessment)

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the amendments on the provisional assessment fees for Household Services NC II.

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of the resolution shall be disseminated to all concerned.

Adopted by Referendum this 12th day of February 2007

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

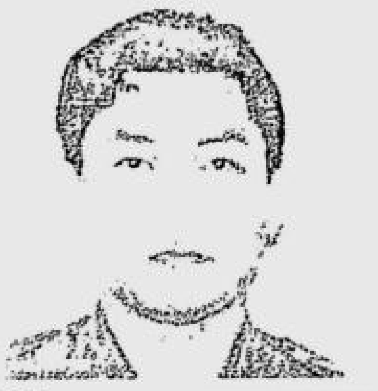
(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–March 1 & 2, 2007)

Pa seeks aid in search for abducted son

By Margaux C. Ortiz

BONIFACIO


PONE

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

THE FATHER OF THE POLICE CHIEF inspector who was allegedly kidnapped by a fellow police official last month yesterday appealed to the suspects to produce his son's body.

Chief Insp. Jack Malinao, chief of the Quezon City Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), said Manuel Pone has been contacting the police about his son Medel's possible whereabouts.

"He has accepted the fact that his son could be dead a month after he was allegedly kidnapped," Malinao said, adding that the elder Pone only wants to give his son a proper burial.

Chief Insp. Medel Pone, former chief of the QC police district's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), was having breakfast with Genevieve Winters in her Quezon City home last Feb. 1 when Supt. Rodrigo Bonifacio of the Traffic Management Group barged in with three unidentified companions. The suspects then forcibly took Pone, hogtied him and loaded the victim inside their getaway vehicle, according to Malinao.

"Winters and her two female helpers positively identified Bonifacio as the leader of the group," Malinao said.

He added, however, that they have yet to identify the three other suspects. Bonifacio, on the other hand, has been in hiding since the Feb. 1 incident.

Investigators of the Quezon City Police District earlier said that they would look into reports that a love triangle could have been the motive behind the kidnapping.

Lawyers argue over Leviste hospital stay

By DJ Yap

A JUDGE YESTERDAY ORDERED THE National Bureau of Investigation to send its doctors to the Makati Medical Center where former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste is confined so they could conduct an independent examination of his condition.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 issued the order as state prosecutors and defense lawyers squabbled over Leviste's continued confinement in the medical facility.

At yesterday's hearing, prosecutors insisted that Leviste be brought back to his cell at the Makati City Jail while his lawyers maintained he should be allowed to stay at the MMC.

Leviste, charged with the murder of his longtime aide Rafael de las Alas, has been receiving treatment and undergoing tests at the hospital since Feb. 23 after complaining of dizziness and shortness of breath.

Doctors later said he had been admitted for "hypovolemic shock secondary to acute gastrointestinal bleeding," and was in a "guarded but stable condition."

Leviste's lawyer, Manuel Singson, asked the court to allow Leviste's "indefinite" stay at the MMC until his attending physicians gave him a clean bill of health.

But Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco expressed serious doubts about Leviste's condition, describing his hospital stay as a "charade" and "drama."

He asked the court to order the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to transfer Leviste back to his cell at the Makati City Jail "immediately."

Alameda said Leviste should remain in the hospital until he is discharged by the attending physician.

We live in dangerous times

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

WE LIVE IN DANGEROUS TIMES, BUT there's nothing we can do about it.

Two armed men barged into the home of an office executive in Project 8, Quezon City early morning last Friday.

One of the executive's sons ran to his parents' room when he saw the two men coming in. Before he could enter his parents' room, the boy was shot in the leg.

The frightened son, 21, huddled with his parents inside the master bedroom.

But the couple forgot about the younger son, 18, who was sleeping in his bedroom.

The armed men fired shots inside the house. The couple and the elder son thought the shots were just meant to scare the house occupants.

What they didn't know was that the shots were fired at the younger boy.

The housemaid, who was in the adjacent room, heard the cries for help of the 18-year-old boy.

"*Huwag po, maawa po kayo* (Please don't shoot, have mercy on me)," the maid quoted the boy appealing to the robbers to spare his life.

The father wanted to come out to see if his other son was safe, but was prevented by his wife. There was no gun in the house.

All the three could do was call 117, an emergency number equivalent to the US 911, while the gunmen were inside their home.

The police arrived all right—after 30 minutes—long after the gunmen were gone.

Had there been a gun in the house or if the police were quick in answering the call for help, do you think that tragedy would have taken place?

I'm withholding the identity of the bereaved family at their request. I'm a friend of the father.

But I'm asking the Quezon City Police District to find the robber-killers and bring them to justice.

***

The tragedy at Project 8 is a commentary against "gunless society" advocacy and being overly dependent on the police for one's protection.

Let's face it: When the government deprives good citizens of the right to protect themselves in their homes by not allowing them to own guns, the government tells the bad guys to have a party.

Let's face another reality: The police in this country are useless because they are either corrupt or incompetent.

Many cops don't even know how to handle a gun.

An incompetent and corrupt police force, plus an incompetent and corrupt national leadership, equals chaos.

***

While on the subject of guns, Philippine National Police Chief Oscar Calderon consistently refuses to issue this writer a permit to carry his pistol outside his home.

I need a gun for my personal protection.

I need a gun to carry around because I have gained enemies as a result of my acid pen.

I need to protect myself from government officials and private individuals whom I have severely criticized in this column.

This country is the most dangerous place for a journalist, second only to Iraq.

What's the matter, guys, you want to do me in without giving me a fighting chance?

If that's the case, then I might be forced to violate the law against carrying a gun without a permit.

Surivival is man's primordial instinct.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BID AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP), thru its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective modistes/textile suppliers for the following:

Item No.	Name of Project/Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract
1	Supply of the design/s, materials and labor (Hecho Derecho) for the uniforms of the BSP female employees, and	P 19,100,000.00
2	Supply of the design/s and materials for the uniforms of the BSP male employees.	P 15,200,000.00

Details and Checklist of Eligibility Requirements may be obtained on 01-14 March 2007 from the BAC Secretariat upon submission of a letter of intent and payment of a non-refundable fee of P22,600.00.

Interested bidders must submit the eligibility requirements to the BAC, Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, corner A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sts., Malate, Manila, not later than 30 March 2007, 10:30 A.M.

Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Interested bidders must meet the following criteria.

1. Prospective bidders should have been in operation in the supply of clothing materials design/s and sewing of office male and female uniforms for the last five (5) years (reckoned from the date of the advertisement/posting of this invitation).
2. Prospective bidders should have satisfactorily completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) at least three (3) contracts for the supply of clothing materials design/s and sewing of office uniforms projects of similar nature as the subject BSP project with aggregate contract amount of at least 50% of the ABC, one of which costs at least 25% of the ABC.
3. The firm (partnership/corporation/joint venture) of the prospective bidders must be at least 60% owned by Filipino citizen.
4. For those firms with previous or current supply of clothing materials, design/s and sewing services contracts with the BSP, a certificate of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank should be submitted.

Ocular inspection of the shops and facilities of prospective modistes (female uniform) shall be conducted on those who comply with the eligibility requirements, and those who passed the ocular inspection shall be requested to submit samples of uniform materials and prototypes of uniform designs and only those whose sample/s and prototype/s are found acceptable will be invited to participate in the bidding which will be conducted on a later date to be advised.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract shall apply.

The BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation. Furthermore, BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate/indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–March 1, 2007)

METROBRIEFS

New Sibol School in Nova

THE CFC-International-GK Village in Barangay Bagbag, Remarville, Novaliches, is the ninth recipient of a Sibol School made possible with the partnership of the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) with Gawad Kalinga (GK). The school, a two-story building designed for preschool children to promote early childhood care and development, was inaugurated last month by Meralco chair and CEO Manuel M. Lopez and GK executive director Antonio Meloto. Lopez turned over the key to the community's Kapitbahayan president, Boning de la Cruz, to signify the transfer of responsibility of maintaining the school. "We have come a long way with GK and saw how our involvement through a Sibol School empowers a community. Volunteers from Meralco have spent their weekends to help build this school since we believe that education, being one of the core thrusts of Meralco's corporate social responsibility, has the power to change lives and transform communities for the better," Lopez said.

Orchid show opens March 1

THE PHILIPPINE Orchid Society will hold its 61sth annual Orchid and Garden Show from March 1-12 at the Orchidarium Park (lagoon area) in front of the Quezon City Hall complex in Diliman, Quezon City. The theme of the show is "Responsible orchid-growing for the protection and conservation of our Philippine orchid species." There will also be a competition for orchid lovers, lectures on orchid propagation, floral arrangements, landscaping and orchid care, among others. Exhibit hours are from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more details, please contact Jenny Rivera at 929-4425 or 926-5061.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Iran still defiant on nuclear program

TEHRAN—IRAN VOWED TUESDAY NEVER TO yield to the West's key demand of a freeze on sensitive nuclear work after world powers agreed to work on a new resolution that could prepare more UN sanctions against Tehran.

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Iran would never repeat the experience of agreeing a temporary suspension of uranium enrichment which Tehran had enforced as a part of an agreement with Europe in 2004.

"One thing that is not feasible is the Iranian nation backing down on having nuclear technology for peaceful purposes," Mottaki told a conference in Tehran.

"Europe gave us a list of suggestions but in return wanted us to halt enrichment, which is an illegal and illegitimate request and based on a false political premise which, God willing, will never be realized," he said.

Chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani later appeared to strike a more conciliatory line, saying that no subject would be taboo if talks were agreed. But he too reaffirmed Tehran would not accept any preconditions before sitting down.

"Iran has always welcomed a sensible path to solve this issue and has said all subjects can be discussed. Nothing needs to be held back," Larijani told state television.

"In the negotiations, if anyone has any worries or issues on Iran's nuclear case they can come forwards and discuss them." While US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has insisted she is ready for talks with Mottaki, Washington has always maintained Tehran must halt its uranium enrichment activities first.

"First we have to see if the negotiations would be based on logical conditions and reach a conclusion or if the outcome of negotiations would be decided in advance," said Larijani, in an apparent renewed rejection of the US conditions.

AFP

Cuba's Castro recovering, sounds stronger on radio

CARACAS—CUBAN LEADER FIDEL CASTRO said on Tuesday he was recovering and feeling stronger in his first live radio broadcast since emergency stomach surgery forced him to relinquish power in July.

Sounding much healthier and more lucid than he has in taped video clips released during his convalescence, Castro laughed frequently in a half-hour chat with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez that was marked by boyish humor.

"I am gaining ground. I feel I have more energy, more strength, more time to study," he said on his top ally's nightly call-in radio show, which was later played on Cuban state television.

"I have become a student again," Castro added with a chuckle.

His guest appearance came as a surprise to listeners.

Chavez said his energy minister was on the line but the 80-year-old Cuban's voice broke in: "Listen, my distinguished and dear friend, how are you?"

"Goodness, it's Fidel," Chavez replied.

Then the two icons of Latin America's left, who pride themselves on their anti-Americanism, exchanged pleasantries—in English.

"Fidel, how are you?" Chavez said with a heavy accent. "Very well," Castro replied as they both laughed.

Castro later commented on the fall of world stock markets on Tuesday, the worst in years, and said it was proof of his view that capitalism was in crisis.

Chavez calls Castro his mentor and has frequently visited him during his convalescence, with images of the meetings broadcast afterward.

A video clip of their last meeting released almost a month ago showed Castro had put on weight but remained frail. Castro has not been seen in public since the surgery.

In power since 1959, Castro handed over control temporarily to his brother, Defense Minister Raul Castro, on July 31.

Castro's condition is a tightly guarded state secret. His illness was officially attributed to the "extreme stress" of his workload.

Cuba watchers say Castro's backstage presence and the carefully staged meetings with Chavez could be reassuring to Cubans and help his successors maintain the one-party state.

The conversation with Chavez on Tuesday was broadcast by Cuban state television, where presenters looked overjoyed. It was the first time Cubans had heard Castro speak in a live broadcast since his last public appearance at a rally on July 26.

Castro and Chavez touched on political and economic topics such as producing ethanol as an energy source and Venezuela's industrial output.

Reuters

Prince Charles wants McDo banned

LONDON—PRINCE CHARLES SUGGESTED TUESday on a visit to the United Arab Emirates that banning fast food chain McDonald's was crucial for improving people's diets, a British news agency reported.

Charles made the comments while visiting the Imperial College London Diabetes Center in Abu Dhabi for the launch of a public health campaign.

"Have you got anywhere with McDonald's? Have you tried getting it banned? That's the key," Charles was quoted as asking one of the center's nutritionists.

A McDonald's spokeperson called the remark disappointing. She said other members of his family "have probably got a more up-to-date picture of us," alluding to reports that Charles' son, Prince Harry, was spotted eating a chicken burger at McDonald's in 2005.

"This appears to be an off-the-cuff remark, in our opinion," the spokesperson said on condition of anonymity in line with company practice in Britain.

"It does not reflect our menu or where we are as a business," she said.

The Oak Brook, Illinois-based McDonald's Corp. took steps last year to display nutrition facts on its packaging and vary its menu to counter charges that its food is unhealthy and contributes to obesity. There are 25 McDonald's franchises in the United Arab Emirates.

Charles, who is first in line to the British throne, is an active advocate of organic food and in 1986 set up a farm on his Highgrove Estate that does not use artificial pesticides or fertilizers.

The prince was in the United Arab Emirates with his wife, Camilla, as part of a tour of Gulf countries.

The United Arab Emirates has the world's second highest number of diabetes cases per capita, with more than 20 percent of those aged 20 to 79 already diagnosed with the illness, while 40 percent of the population are at risk.

AP

BRITAIN'S Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales seems to be reluctant to taste a plate of grilled salmon during a visit to the Imperial College London Diabetes Center in Abu Dhabi, UAE while on a tour of the Gulf region, Feb. 27.

AP

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Dema, a Sumatran tiger cub sleeps with two baby orangutans in a nursery room at the Taman Safari zoo Wednesday in Bogor, Indonesia. The tiger and orangutan babies, which would never be together in the wild, have become inseparable playmates after they were abandoned by their mothers.

AP

Space trash, illness pose space station risks

WASHINGTON—SPACE DEBRIS, sudden illness and even errant commands from Houston could jeopardize the International Space Station's mission, but backup plans and equipment have most of the threats covered, according to a report released on Tuesday.

The report to Congress finds a 55 percent chance that some sort of space debris could penetrate the space station, home to three crew members, and a 9 percent chance of a "catastrophic result over a 10-year period," Nasa said in the report.

"This risk can be reduced to 29 percent and 5 percent respectively by implementation of changes that are available or being considered for development," it adds.

Another big problem—a lack of money and the planned shutdown of the space shuttle program in 2010 according to the report, written by an independent panel of consultants, Nasa scientists and aerospace engineers.

"If productive operations cannot be restored through other cargo delivery means, the Station might have to be abandoned before Nasa can complete its research objectives and obligations," the report reads.

"Based on the projected shortfalls and the current projected costs of logistic launch services, Nasa will require an additional $1 billion per year to procure the necessary additional launch services."

The full report is available on the Internet at http://www.nasa.gov/mission—pages/station/news/index.html.

The report is "something we are looking at and have been for some time," said Nasa spokesperson Allard Beutel. "A lot of these things have been on our radar for some time." The space station, a joint effort by United States, Russia, Canada, the members of the European Space Agency and Japan, orbits about 400 km above the Earth. US space shuttle missions and missions by the Russian space agency are steadily adding to the station, resupplying it and bringing crew back and forth.

Congress asked Nasa to report on all potential threats that could cause the abandonment or destruction of the space station, meant to be an orbiting base, jump-off point for other human space missions and a way to practice living in space.

The main problem is space junk and natural debris, according to the report.

Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

Taiwan marks massacre

TAIPEI—In islandwide ceremonies, Taiwan on Wednesday honored thousands of people killed by Chinese nationalist troops 60 years ago in a crackdown seen as a catalyst for the independence movement. President Chen Shui-ban, unveiling a new memorial to the victims, vowed to unveil the truth behind the killings, days after singling out late nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek as the man most responsible for the bloodshed. "Although 60 years have passed, the pain inflicted by the incident on the victims' families remains deep, and the scars to society unhealed," he said.

AFP

Be beaten up, get paid

BEIJING—A Chinese businessman has advertised on the Internet for a stand-in mistress to be beaten up by his wife to vent her anger and to protect his real mistress, Chinese media reported on Monday. "When the woman found out her husband had a mistress, she insisted on beating her up," the Beijing Youth Daily said, citing the advertisement posted on a popular online jobs forum on sina.com. More than 10 people had applied for the job, the newspaper said. The "successful" candidate would be 35 and originally from northeastern China and would be paid 3,000 yuan ($400) per 10 minutes, it said.

Reuters

Car bomb kills 10

BAGHDAD—A car bomb ripped through a market in Baghdad on Wednesday killing 10 people, as the Iraqi government called a conference of regional and world powers to seek help to quell sectarian fighting. The explosion erupted in "Street Number 20," a bustling commercial area of Bayaa, near one of the city's many violent frontlines between rival sectarian communities, defense officials and state television said. National police commandos sealed off the scene soon after the blast, as the casualties were ferried to two of the city's overworked hospitals.

AFP

MIGUEL J. OSSORIO PENSION FOUNDATION, INC.

INVITATION TO BID

SUBJECT: SALE OF VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC. SHARES OWNED BY THE MIGUEL J. OSSORIO PENSION FOUNDATION, INC.

By virtue of the authority vested upon the VMC Retirement Committee as appointed trustee of the Miguel J. Ossorio Pension Foundation, Inc. (MJOPFI) for purposes of dissolving and liquidating MJOPFI pursuant to the provisions of the Corporation Code of the Philippines, the Committee wishes to invite all interested parties to submit their bid proposals for the sale of MJOPFI's **One Hundred Seventy Million One Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand One Hundred Fifty-Nine (170,133,159)** shares of stock of Victorias Milling Company, Inc. with a par value of One Peso (Php1.00) per share, representing ten and 66/100 percent **(10.66%)** of the total **subscribed shares** of Victorias Milling Company, Inc. (VMC).

All interested bidders must submit their sealed Bid Proposals in accordance with the Terms of Reference, which may be secured from VMC's Executive Office at VMC Millsite, Victorias City, Negros Occidental or at its Makati Office, 9126 Sultana cor. Honradez Streets, Barangay Olympia, Makati City. Bid Proposals must be submitted to the undersigned **not later than 5:00 P.M. of 1 April 2007**, at the address indicated hereunder, containing the following:

a. Letter of Intent specifying the amount of bid per share and amount of total bid for the full portion of shares offered for sale;
b. Manager's Check equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price offered valid for sixty (60) days (Bidder's Bond);
c. In case of Corporations, a Board Resolution or Secretary's Certificate showing the authority of the bidder to participate in the bidding.

For further information, please contact **Mr. Abelardo E. Bugay**, VMC Retirement Committee Chairman, with office at the **Executive Building, VMC Millsite, Victorias City, Negros Occidental,** with telephone no. **(034)399-3378,** and Fax No. **(034)399-3675**.

VMC RETIREMENT COMMITTEE

(PDI—Mar. 1, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Region X
DIVISION OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL
Osilao St., Poblacion 1, Oroquieta City
Email-add: misamisoccidental@deped.gov.ph
Fax No.: (088) 531-1145 Tel. No · (088) 531-1872 / 531-0067

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Department of Education, Division of Misamis Occidental**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : **Supply & Delivery of 2006 Elementary Set of Tables & Chairs & Secondary Armchairs**
Location : **DepED, Division of Misamis Occidental, Osilao St., Poblacion 1, Oroquieta City**
Brief Description : **School Furniture**
ABC : **Php 12,992,000.00 (75% regular procurement)**
Funding Source : **Government of the Philippines (GOP) Re-enacted General Appropriations Act (GAA) FY 2005**
Contract Duration : **120 days from the date of acceptance of Notice to Proceed**

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of activities are as follow:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 1, 2007 to March 7, 2007	BAC Secretariat Office c/o DepEd Planning Unit
2. Pre-Bid Conference	March 12, 2007 (10:00 AM)	3rd flr., MOPUSTA bldg., conference room
3. Submission and Opening of Bids	March 26, 2007 (10:00 AM)	3rd, MOPUSTA bldg., conference room

A complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders from the BAC Secretariat office c/o Planning Office upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 19,489.50 to the DepED Misamis Occidental Division Cashier. The complete sealed envelopes will be brought during the opening of bids or be dropped in the bidding box placed in the Division Office lobby on or before March 26, 2007 at exactly 10:00 o'clock in the morning. Late bids will not be accepted.

The DepED Misamis Occidental Division, reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, or all bids and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as determined by the BAC is the most advantageous to the government.

Approved:

(Sgd.) REBONFAMIL R. BAGUIO
Asst. Schools Division Superintendent
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – March 1, 2007)

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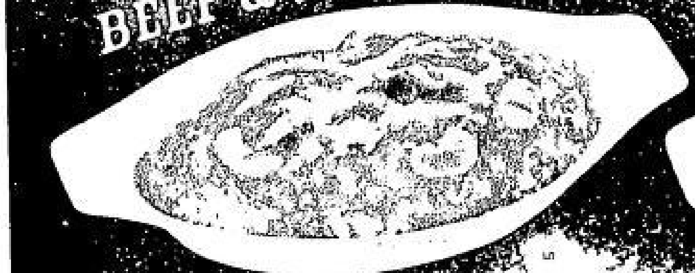
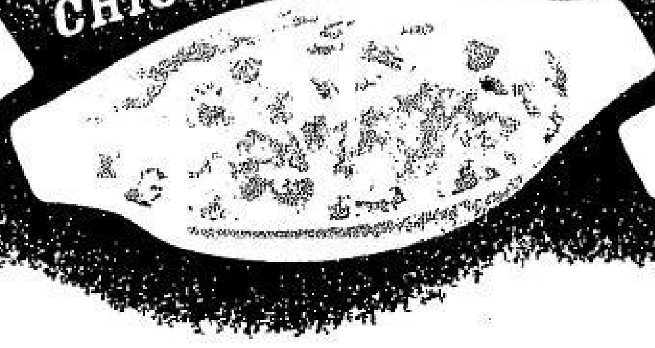


CHICKEN A LA KING



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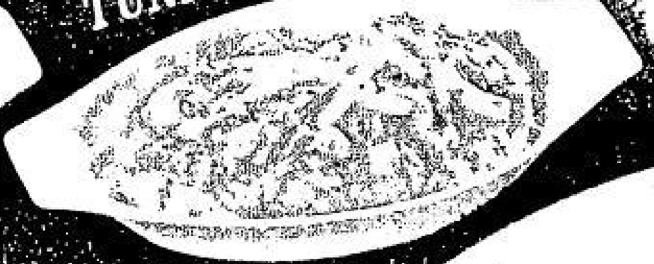

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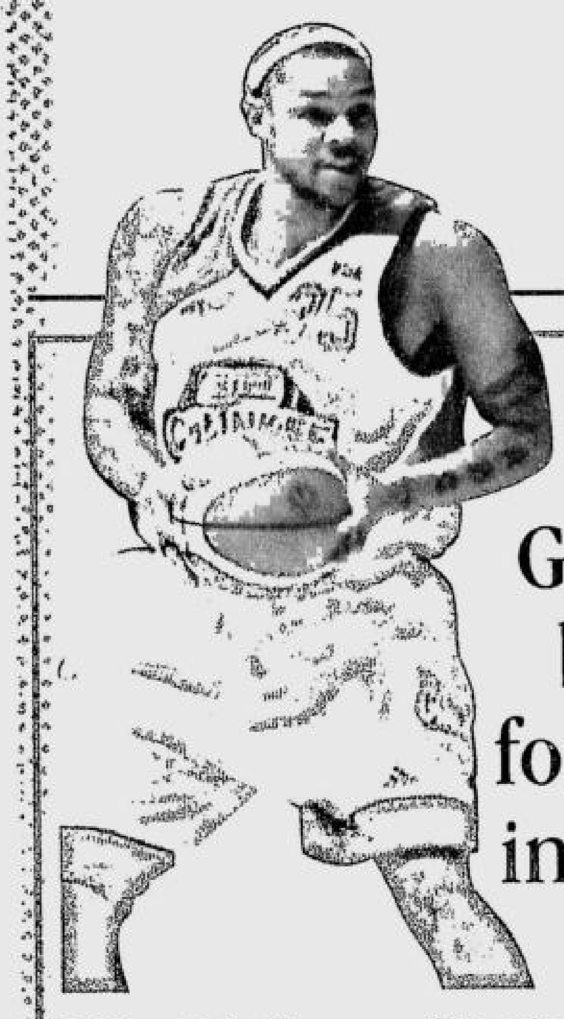
PBA cancels apprentice draft /A22



PUREFOODS hopes Marquin Chandler can lead it to another title.
PDI PHOTO

Giants bring former import back

By Musong R. Castillo

MARQUIN CHANDLER, INjured and all, planes in this morning with Purefoods hoping that the young, fiery import could recuperate in time and enhance the team's chances in the PBA Fiesta Cup that opens on Sunday.

The team, which will now carry the monicker Tender Juicy Giants, have enlisted the services of Jesse King for the time being as Chandler, the Best Import here last year, tries to get in shape quick.

The 6-foot-5 product of San Jose State, who went fresh from college last year to suit up for Purefoods, will be coming off a stint in the tough National Basketball League in Australia.

He is nursing an MCL tear in the right knee, but Purefoods officials, who announced the team's new name yesterday, are optimistic that Chandler will be able to help them get to "at least the finals again this year."

Chandler averaged 25.1 points, 13.9 rebounds and 3.3 assists even though Purefoods lost in six games to Red Bull, which is, incidentally, bringing back the ultrasmart James Penny.

The Giants will not only try to make do with King, who coach Ryan Gregorio said could play "but is not an explosive scorer like Chandler," but they will also be without Marc Pingris and Jun Limpot in the first couple of weeks.

Kerby Raymundo will miss the entire tournament because of commitments to the Philippine team, leaving the hopes of the Giants mostly on forward James

GIANTS/ A22

GAME-FIXING CONTROVERSY

Dableo gets 1-yr ban

Chess association cracks whip on five others

By Roy Luarca

TRUE TO ITS WORD, THE NATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION OF the Philippines cracked the whip on six erring players yesterday with International Master Ronald Dableo getting the direct hit.

Dableo, the 2003 Asian Zonal champion and 2004 world championship campaigner, was banned for one year while IM Darwin Laylo, IM Chito Garma, National Master Oliver Barbosa, Mervin Roque and NWM Enerose Magno were suspended for six months by the NCFP on charges of game-fixing and conniving to rig tournament results last year.

Deciding unanimously, the NCFP executive board adopted the recommendation of the Internal Affairs Committee headed by former Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas with lawyer Edmundo Legaspi and Manny Benitez as members.

The suspension order, signed by NCFP president and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., was served yesterday.

"It's high time we discipline the players," said NCFP secretary general and Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino. "This (suspension) is not only for chess but for the whole sports community."

Tolentino said the NCFP hopes that players would learn their lesson well from the suspension aimed at cleansing local chess.

"It's really a difficult decision (to suspend the

NCFP/ A22

GMA backs 2nd WPC hosting in Manila

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT ARROYO YESTERDAY gave her blessing to the country's hosting of the World Pool Championship for the second straight year.

Encouraged by the tremendous success of the previous WPC won by Filipino Ronato Alcano, the Chief Executive presided over the brief ceremony held in Malacañang which officially bestows to the country the right to stage the prestigious event later this year.

Harvey Davis of ESPN-Star Sports and Yen Makabenta of Raya Sports signed the memorandum of agreement for staging the gathering of the world's best cue artists.

"We are very excited to hold it once again in the country," said Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ernie Fajardo.

He added that it's only fitting that the event be held in what Billiards Digest described as the "epicenter of international pool," having produced world champions like legends Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Alcano.

Alcano, who barely made it past the elimination round, went all the way to win the world title last year, beating German former world champion Ralf Souquet in the final.

The spectacular showdown posted new highs in pool viewing, garnering an audience of 22.5 million adults in cable and free television based on a post-event SWS survey.

Davis reported that the 2006 event drew a total of 89.03 million viewers, eclipsing the 53.4 million who watched in 2005.

Top servings

De La Hoya brings Bautista, Banal to Puerto Rico /A22

Lucky 13 for Mavs /A23

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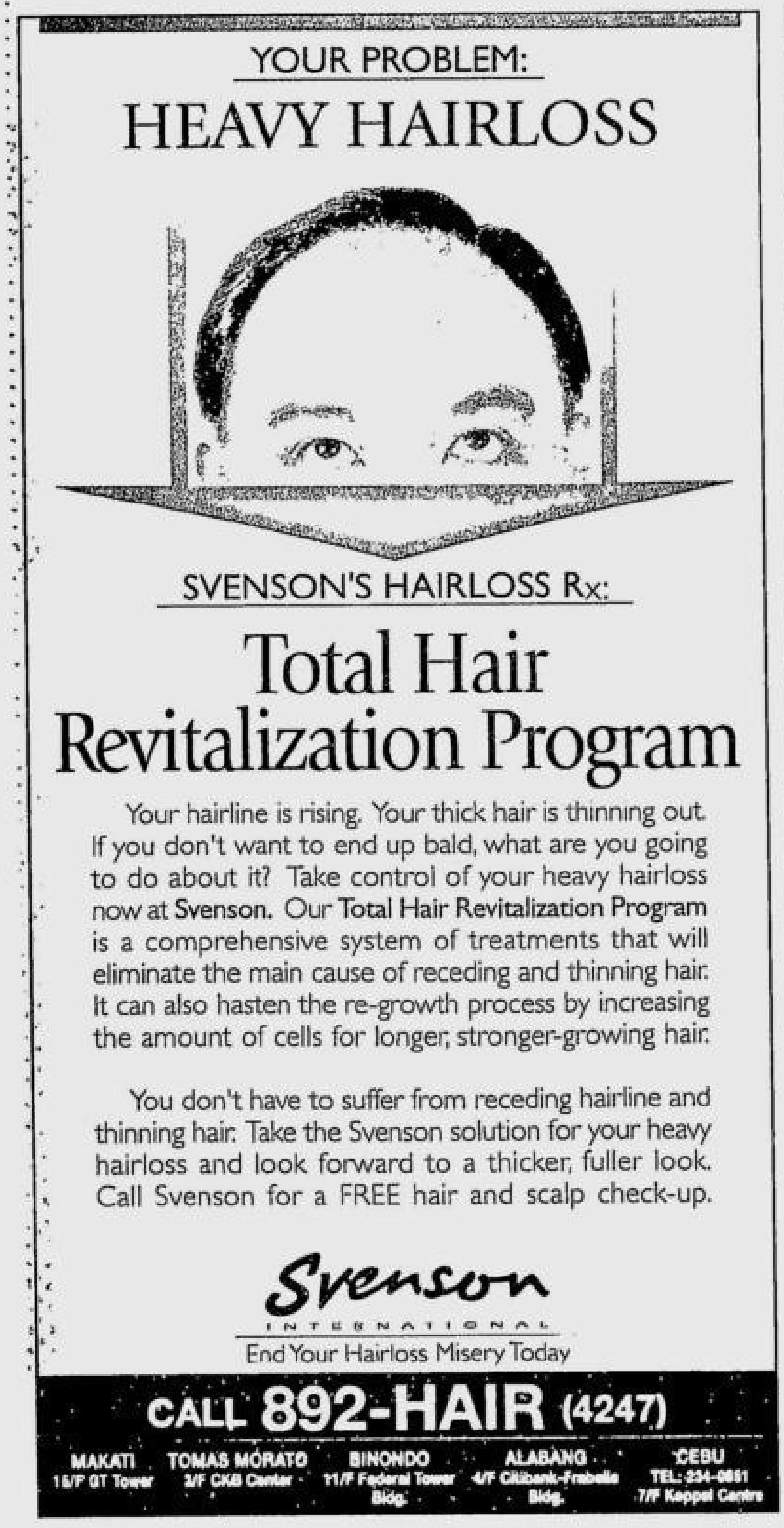

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0536, Series of 2007.

League cancels apprentice draft

PBA teams show no interest in 24-man pool, sign free agents

By Musong R. Castillo

THE CONTROVERSIAL PBA "APPRENtice" draft will not be held today as league officials decided to scrap it at the last minute with no team showing interest in the pool.

Twenty-four names were listed in the pool that turned out to be so shallow that all 10 PBA teams ignored the players in the roster.

The scrapping of the activity is also an off-shoot of the refusal of the amateur Philippine Basketball League to allow its players to enter the draft with the likes of Ken Bono, JC Intal, among others, choosing to just stay away.

The apprentice draft was originally scheduled last week.

As many as 12 amateur players would have been eligible to see action in the pro league on a provisional basis, or for as long as the Philippine team under Chot Reyes is still campaigning.

The PBA saw the apprentice draft as the answer to the manpower shortage created by its lending the marquee names to the National team that will play in the Seaba in May and the Fiba-Asia in July.

But the PBL put its foot down in the apparent "raid" that the PBA will be doing. One team owner said the exercise could kill the PBL in the process.

Teams in the pro league, in turn, were left with no other choice but to beef up their ranks by signing players from the free agent market. Purefoods, for instance, which lost Kerby Raymundo to the National team, signed up journeyman Arnold Gamboa.

CAGUIOA: Irreplaceable

Though the concept showed a lot of promise at the start, the apprentice draft won't really serve its purpose considering that teams like Barangay Ginebra, Talk 'N Text and San Miguel Beer practically lost their core to the RP Team.

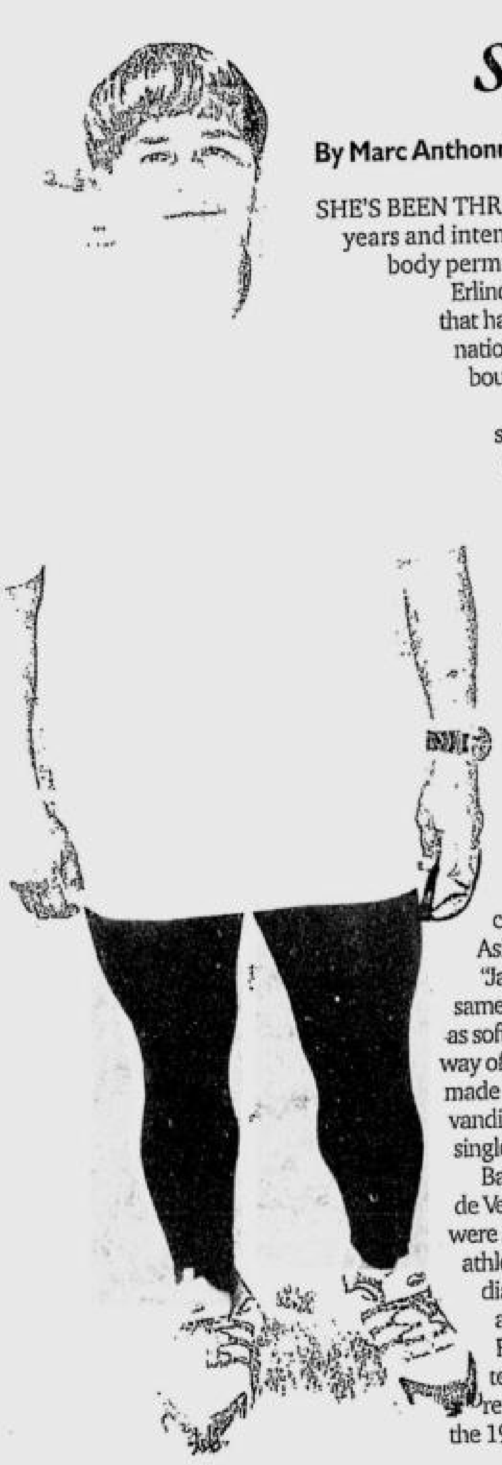
Mark Caguioa, Jay-Jay Helterbrand and Rudy Hatfield will not suit up for the Gin Kings in the coming Fiesta Cup, and no amount of recruitment could possibly fill that void for the team.

Dondon Hontiveros and Danny Seigle, the top two San Miguel scorers, were also named to the RP Team, while the Phone Pals will lose Asi Taulava, Ren-Ren Ritualo and Jimmy Alapag.

The other members of the team are Mick Pennisi of Red Bull, Tony Dela Cruz of Alaska, Kerby Raymundo of Purefoods and Ranidel de Ocampo of Air21. Enrico Villanueva of Red Bull, Rafi Reavis of Ginebra and Rommel Adducul of San Miguel were named alternates.

Only Sta. Lucia and Coca-Cola were left untouched by Reyes, leaving the Realtors, considering how formidable their lineup is, as a true force in the import-laden tournament that opens Sunday.

At 54, there's still no stopping Lavandia



By Marc Anthonmy Reyes

SHE'S BEEN THROWING THE JAVELIN FOR 35 years and intends to continue for as long as her body permits.

Erlinda Lavandia's passion for the event that has brought her national and international recognition really knows no bound.

Now 54 years old, Lavandia has strung up two gold medals in the 50-55 division of the World Masters athletics championships. She first did the trick in 2003 in Puerto Rico and duplicated it in the 2005 edition in Spain.

"I want to compete as long as I can," said Lavandia, who was discovered in 1972 by the late Gov. Jose Sering, then athletics chief, back in their hometown in Surigao del Norte.

Lavandia started as a catcher for her province's softball team until she found her way to the national track and field team, representing the country in the Southeast Asian Games.

"Javelin has almost the same throwing techniques as softball does, it's been a way of life for me since I made that switch," said Lavandia, who chose to remain single.

Back then, when Lydia de Vega and Elma Muros were still up-and-coming athletics stars, Lavandia was the front and center of the RP track and field team. She built her reputation as a tough competitor in the 1977 Jakarta SEA Games when she snared the country's lone athletics' gold.

"That's when she was dubbed as "Lavandia the Great," said RP national coach Jojo Posadas, whose wife Elma will compete alongside Lavandia in the 2007 Masters in Italy this September.

Lavandia duplicated her gold medal feat in the 1979, 1981, 1983 and 1985 editions, making the Police Sr. Inspector the acclaimed javelin legend in the regional multievent competitions.

Fact is, Lavandia's 24-year-old national mark of 49.84 meters still stands. The same distance stood as the SEAG standard until it was surpassed a few years ago.

Aside from competing, Lavandia also acts as training staff of the Ilocos Norte Athletics Association which is now seeing action in the Ilocos Region Athletics Association meet in San Carlos City, Pangasinan.

"Right now I don't see myself concentrating on just coaching, I want to compete until my body tells me not to do it anymore," said Lavandia. "After all, the World Masters has competitions even for 80 and 90 year olds."

That's how deep she loves javelin throwing.

That, for sure, is an eternity of track and field ahead of her.

ERLINDA Lavandia currently coaches the Ilocos Norte team. RAY B. ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

THE PUREFOODS squad, renamed Tender Juicy Giants, raise a toast to a successful Fiesta Conference. Leading the toast are head coach Ryan Gregorio (right), team alternate governor Rene Pardo (left), San Miguel Corporation basketball operations chief Robert Non (second from left) and Purefoods-Hormel general manager Noel Tempongko (third from left).

Giants bring back old import

From page A21

Yap.

"Our goal is to at least get back to the Finals," Gregorio said yesterday. "It will be very challenging, at least in the first two weeks with Pingris and Limpot expected to be out."

Pingris, who will wed actress Danica Sotto on Saturday, is still recovering from a severe left ankle sprain, while Limpot has bone spurs in his left foot.

"I don't have a problem getting married (on the week of the tournament), the honeymoon can wait," the 6-foot-6 Pingris told a handful of reporters in Filipino. "I just like to play and I have been praying to God to make my foot heal."

Meanwhile, seven provincial games and the PBA's first-ever official game in Dubai spice up Fiesta Cup action starting March 17.

San Miguel and Coca-Cola clash in Lanao on that day, before Cabanatuan hosts the Talk 'N Text-Welcoat setto a week later and Alaska battles Purefoods on March 31 in Cagayan de Oro.

A three-week break will follow as Barangay Ginebra and Purefoods fly to oil-rich Dubai for their elimination round game scheduled April 13 at the Al-Ahli Sports Club.

Tacloban will be the site of the San Miguel-Sta. Lucia encounter on April 21, while the Kings battle Air21 in Urdaneta on May 5.

San Miguel and Red Bull clash in Cebu on May 12, before Ginebra hits the road one more time, going to Naga to battle the Phone Pals.

Alaska collides with Red Bull on May 26 in Bacolod to round out the schedule.

Aldeguer heads DLSAA Hall of Fame inductees

By Dennis U. Eroa
Libre Sports Editor

A FORMER GREEN ARCHER TURNED INTERnational boxing promoter, a noted educator and builder of sports coliseums, an outstanding golfer and footballer and a topnotch lady shooter will be inducted March 3 to the De La Salle Alumni Association Hall of Fame.

Antonio "Tony" Aldeguer, Bro. Rolando Ramos Dizon, FSC; Maria Concepcion Exconde Gana, Miguel de la Riva Preysler and Federico Pacheco Veloso will join the illustrious list of Hall of Famers which include, among others, bowling great Paeng Nepomuceno, basketball star Lim Eng Beng and topnotch rallye driver Pocholo Ramirez.

DLSAA president Juanito B. Gervasio said the induction ceremonies will serve as highlight of the annual alumni homecoming dubbed as GREENerations at the DLSU-Taft campus. The event is hosted by the Silver Jubilarians of Class '82 and will gather the best and brightest La Salle alummi.

Aldeguer saw action for the Green Archers from 1961 to 65 then devoted his time to promoting boxing.

An alumnus of University of St. La Salle-Bacolod, Bro. Dizon is a former president of DLSU known for his focus on the National UniGames, volleyball and chess.

Gana carried the country's flag proudly in the Southeast Asian Games shooting competitions (English match standard rifle) from 1981 to 1997 where she netted a total of 4 golds, 5 silvers and two bronzes.

Preysler started his colorful golfing career by winning the national junior golf championship in 1966.

Veloso played for the Philippines in various international football competirions starting in the 1956 Asian Youth Football Tournament in Kuala Lumpur.

De La Hoya takes Bautista, Banal to Puerto Rico camp

CEBU CITY—OSCAR DE LA HOYA will not be training alone in Puerto Rico.

Golden Boy Promotions vice president Eric Gomez called sports patron Antonio L. Aldeguer yesterday to confirm, among other things, that Bautista and Banal, two Filipino pugs who earned slots on the undercard of the highly anticipated De La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather Jr. bout, will train with the Golden Boy in Puerto Rico.

De La Hoya will shape up for what could be his biggest bout ever under the tutelage of Manny Pacquiao honer Freddie Roach, who will also oversee the preparations of Bautista and Banal.

The De La Hoya-Mayweather bout, dubbed "The World Awaits," is being considered as the biggest event in the history of boxing, which has already broken tickets records in Las Vegas history this far from its May 5 playdate.

The main event features two superstars and future Hall-of-Famers, as De La Hoya defends his WBC super-welterweight crown against the undefeated pound-for-pound superstar Mayweather Jr.

BAUTISTA

Bautista (22-0, 17 KOs), who will take on Argentina's Sergio Medina, will be included in the pay-per-view telecast worldwide, while Banal's bout will be nationally televised in the Philippines.

Gomez actually called Aldeguer to confirm that the title elimination bout between WBO No. 1-ranked Bautista and No. 2 Sergio Medina is definitely on, as well as the inclusion of Banal in the card.

"They are expected to leave middle of March," Aldeguer told the INQUIRER. Aldeguer's son Michael manages both Bautista and Banal.

Last Saturday, Bautista showcased his dynamite power when he demolished Mexico's Marino Gonzalez inside three rounds in the "Moment of Truth" card in Cebu City, drawing positive reactions from no less than WBO president Paco Valcarcel, who was at ringside to witness the historic Cebu event, where more than 20,000 fans showed up at the venue.

On the same card, the 18-year-old Banal (12-0, 10 KOs) also did not fail to impress, as he poleaxed Thailand's former Paba super flyweight king Komrit Evereadygym with a single shot to the jaw right in the opening round, and Valcarcel immediately compared him with the young Hector "Macho" Camacho.

Salven Lagumbay, contributor

Koronadal needs ₱100M for Palaro

KORONADAL CITY—THE CITY needs at least P100 million to spruce up sports and other facilities for the week-long Palarong Pambansa, which starts April 22.

"Hosting the national sports competition is a tough task ahead," said Mayor Fernando Miguel. This would mean accommodating at least 12,000 athletes, coaches and other sports officials, he said.

Miguel said the national government had committed P70 million for the event while the city would raise a counterpart fund.

It will be the first time for Koronadal to be the sole host of the Palaro. In 1996, it co-hosted the national games with General Santos City and Sarangani province.

Miguel expressed optimism that the renovation of facilities and other preparations would be completed in time for the opening of the games.

In Maguindanao, the Palarong Panlalawigan kicked off Monday in Mamasapano town with some 9,000 delegates participating.

Mamasapano Mayor Akmad Ampatuan said he was happy to have transformed the once war-torn municipality into a sports arena.

"We succeeded in changing the image of our town from being a battle ground of Moro rebels and government forces to becoming a sports converging center. This is better than killing one another," Ampatuan said.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front has vowed to help secure the games.

Dr. Tahir Sulaik, provincial health chief, said some 100 health workers would be fielded to attend to the needs of the delegates. *Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

NCFP . . .

From page A21

players), but we have to do it for the sake of chess," added Tolentino.

Dableo, who with Laylo represented the country in last year's Doha Asian Games, received the harshest punishment after his involvement in a game-fixing activity in a tournament in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was established.

Garma, Laylo, Barbosa, Roque and Magno were suspended for their roles in game-fixing activities in separate tournaments (First GMA Cup, Pichay Cup, Tanauan Cup) last year.

Other players implicated in game-fixing charges were still being investigated by the NCFP committee.

Meanwhile, the Tagaytay City chess team of Mayor Tolentino will leave for Iran today in time for the opening of the 2007 Asian Cities Chess Team Championship in Tehran.

The team is composed of GMs Mark Paragua and Rogelio Antonio Jr. and IMs Oliver Dimakiling and Wesley So. Team captain is NCFP director Wilfredo Abalos.

Tagaytay bagged the title in the 2005 edition, nipping Guangzhou of China in the tiebreak.

Miñoza, Que join JW golf

PHUKET, THAILAND—A REFRESHED Thongchai Jaidee is primed for a charge at the $2.44 million Johnnie Walker Classic starting on Thursday where he hopes to end the region's title drought at the Blue Canyon Country Club. Thongchai, a two-time Asian Tour No. 1, will be in for a bumpy ride, however, as highly touted Ernie Els, Retief Goosen and Adam Scott, all former winners of the event, are entered. Other big guns include Filipino legend Frankie Miñoza, the Asian Tour current Order of Merit leader, Ryder Cup star Paul Casey, former Masters champion Mike Weir, eight-time European number one Colin Montgomerie, India's Jeev Milkha Singh, the Asian Tour's UBS Order of Merit champion, and rising Filipino start Angelo Que

Lucky 13 for Mavs; Cavs tame Hornets

NEW YORK—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS RECORDED A 13th straight victory on Tuesday, easing to an emphatic 91-65 win over a dismal Minnesota Timberwolves in Minneapolis.

Dallas set a franchise record for the fewest points allowed in a game as the T-Wolves were held to a woeful 29.6 percent shooting from the field, scoring 27 points in the first half, including just eight in the second quarter.

The shooting performance was the worst in Minnesota franchise history and left T-Wolves forward Marko Jaric frustrated after the game.

"I think it's about pride, and that we don't have that right now," he told reporters.

The Mavericks have the best record in the NBA at 48-9 and completed February with a perfect 10-0 record.

The 13-game streak matches a season-best streak for the Mavericks, who also had a 12-game winning run.

Dirk Nowitzki had 23 points and 14 rebounds for the Mavericks, while Jason Terry added 18 points.

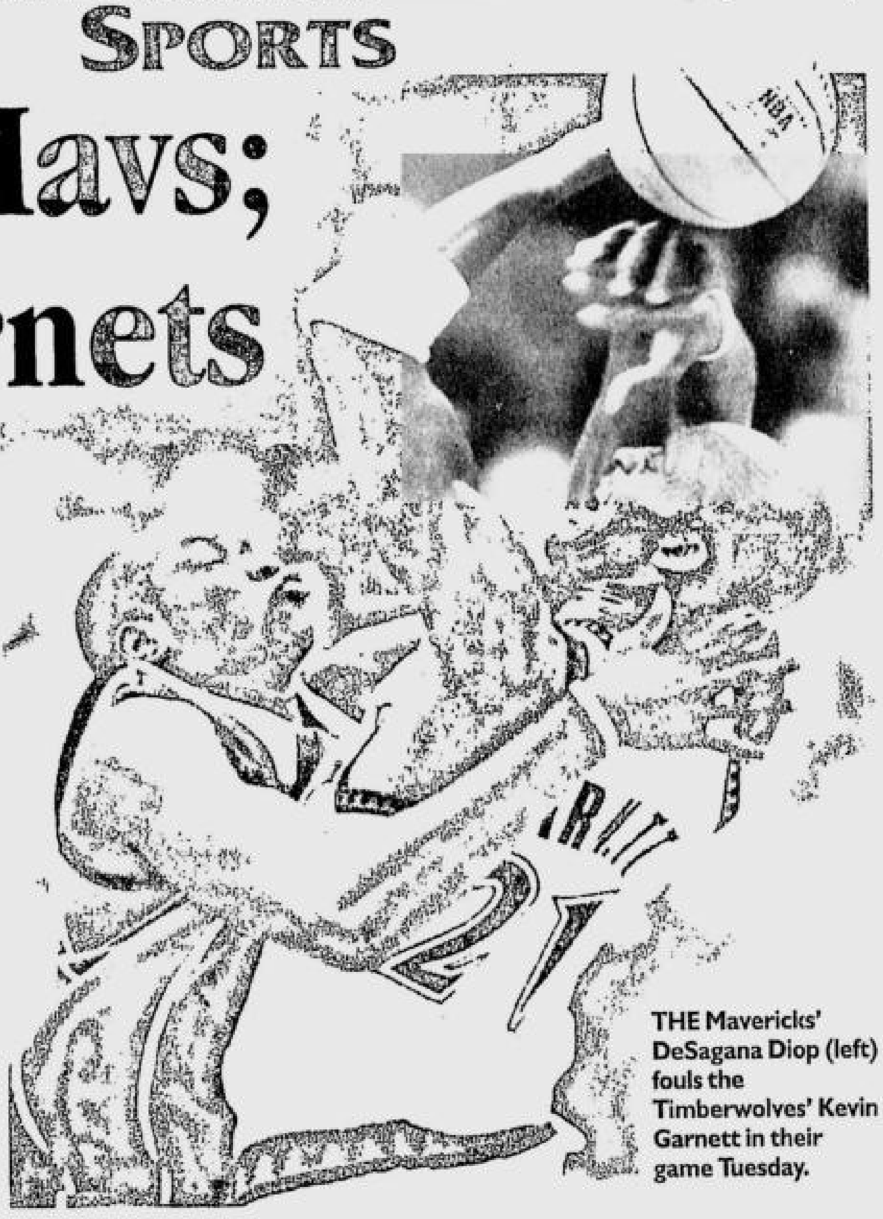
Kevin Garnett had 15 points and 13 rebounds for Minnesota and Ricky Davis added 15 points in a losing cause.

LeBron James had 35 points to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 97-89 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

The Phoenix Suns improved to 14-0 against Eastern Conference teams this season with a 103-92 win over the Indiana Pacers. The Suns rallied from an 18-point deficit in the third quarter as Steve Nash led the way with 25 points and 11 assists.

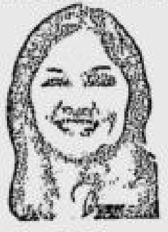
The New Jersey Nets nailed a franchise record 16 three-pointers in a 113-101 win over the Washington Wizards.

Michael Redd scored 31 points as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Golden State Warriors, 122-101. Reuters


THE Mavericks' DeSagana Diop (left) fouls the Timberwolves' Kevin Garnett in their game Tuesday.

NBA material except for height

IN HUDDLE


Beth Celis

NOBODY NOTICED, LEAST OF ALL THE Fil-Am cager who was the subject of a scouting expedition to Manila recently.

The NBA scout, described as the number two man of the Toronto Raptors by player agent Bobby Rius who is now based in Las Vegas, quietly flew in from the United States some months ago to personally look over the cager who he had heard so much about.

"He wanted to see for himself if the cager is NBA material. His longtime dream is to discover the first Filipino NBA player," said Bobby who has been bringing imports to the Philippines for over 30 years now.

The NBA scout Bobby was talking about is no other than American Jim Kelly, who had a stint in the Philippines working as trainer for Great Taste. Later he was hired by RFM's Joey Concepcion to personally train and develop the 6-foot-9 Bonel Balingit.

Since then, Jim has married a Filipina, gone back to the United States and started a family. Because he is so nice and accommodating, his Pinoy friends always make it a point to drop by and see him when they're in the US. Jim today is the chief scout for the Raptors.

* * *

Jim came home with a scouting report, his dream of discovering the first Filipino cager remaining unfulfilled.

Not that the Fil-Am cager didn't measure up to his expectations. In Jim's book, he was as good as bruited about, definitely NBA material.

What Mark Caguioa didn't measure up to was the NBA ceiling.

"He was a bit too short, according to Jim," Bobby said. "If only he had been at least 6-3..."

Mark stands 6 feet flat.

* * *

Bobby is scheduled to fly back to Las Vegas today. Both he and wife Hilda are retired but he is considering a job offer with a double digit pay back in San Francisco.

After touring half of the world, the Riuses made a last stop to Manila, where Bobby will attend two of his Alma Mater's alumni reunion—San Beda and Ateneo.

Mixing business with pleasure, Bobby has also brought back imports James Penny for Red Bull and Marquin Chandler for Purefoods and introduced new talent Anthony Johnson to Coke.

He said he hopes to bring in Kelly Whitney, an import recommended by Jim Kelly, to San Miguel.

* * *

"Expect a visit from Bobby Parks and his son ReyRey when the school season is over,"Bobby R. said. "Although ReyRey has lived here before, Bob wants his son to have a feel of the country again and, more importantly, basketball in the country.

ReyRey, who is 13 and stands 6-3, lives with his father in Memphis.

"He looks Filipino and he speaks Tagalog. He's a sensational player like his father. You'll get a chance to see this for yourself in June," Bobby said.

* * *

Speaking of imports, Lito Alvarez has also signed up Air21's comebacking import Shawn Daniels yesterday at his office in Paranaque.

As of that day however, Lito still wasn't sure which coach the import was going to play for.

Air 21 has made an offer to Jaworski, but so far, there has been no reply.

"The ball is in the Big J's hands," Lito said.

From all indications, it looks like Jawo wants to get actively involved in basketball again.

I guess all the two parties have to agree upon is the compensation package.

* * *

Purefoods held a press conference yesterday to announce that the team will be using the name "Tender Juicy Giants," in celebration of it's 50th anniversary.

Embattled James Yap was there but nobody dared ask him about his personal life. Not over the microphone at least, during the open forum.

Anyway, Marc Pingris has denied rumors that his wedding to Danica Sotto was going to be cancelled.

"Tuloy ang kasal."

The Purefoods Tender Juicy Giants, from team manager Alvin Patrimonio, coach Ryan Gregorio and governor Rene Pardo to the players and ballboys, are all determined to bag the crown this conference, to mark the company's golden anniversary.

Pagunsan joins RP Omega Cup

JUVIC PAGUNSAN MAKES HIS RETURN TO golf scene after a three-week absence as he joins the elite cast chasing the top P120,000 purse in the Omega Cup Philippines 2007 beginning today at Wack Wack's east course. Pagunsan, the Asian Tour's top rookie last year who sustained a shoulder injury at the Qatar Masters, will be among the 32 invited pros clashing for top honors in the event which offers a total prize money of P660,000. Hitting the ceremonial drives are Oliver Hugentobler, regional sales manager for Omega, Ivan Yao, president of Swiss Prestige Holdings, Inc. , Richard Gomez, Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos, Wack Wack president Luis Tan and defending pro champion Mars Pucay.

FG eyed as SEAG chef de mission

By June Navarro

FIRST GENTLEMAN MIKE ARROYO remains the choice of sports leaders as chef de mission of Team Philippines in the coming Southeast Asian Games.

Although he refused the post when it was offered to him in last year's Asian Games, officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission still want Arroyo to be on top of preparations for the country's defense of its first-ever overall title in the 24th edition of the SEAG in Thailand at the end of the year.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez and Arroyo are scheduled to meet early next week to discuss the chef de mission issue, a reliable source told the Inquirer.

Should Arroyo accept the job, two deputies will also be appointed by the POC since the First Gentleman is expected to be tied with other commitments aside from giving the RP contingent the much-needed shot in the arm.

Ramirez, the chef de mission during the 2005 SEAG hosted by the country and in the Doha, Qatar Asian Games last year, has been lobbying for the early appointment of a chef de mission, whose main task is to direct the affairs of the delegation in the biennial meet.

The Olympic body has opted, however, to appoint its representatives in the joint POC-PSC SEAG Task Force first before naming the chef de mission.

Representing the POC in the joint task force are wushu's Julian Camacho, Romeo Ribano of squash and swimming's Mark Joseph. Representing the PSC are commissioners Ritchie Garcia, Joey Mundo and Leon Montemayor.

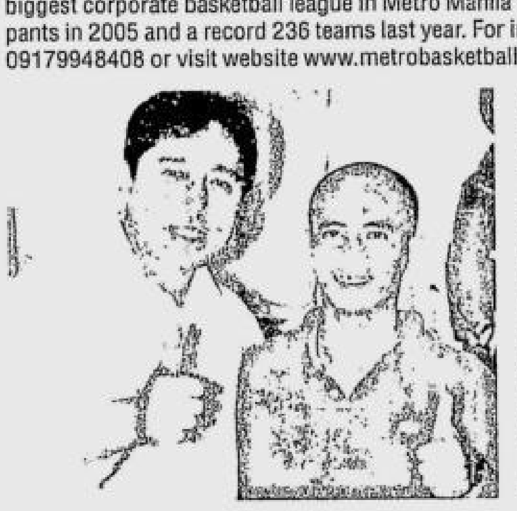
Garcia and Camacho are the top choices as chef de mission if Arroyo decides to remain in the background.

Ramirez said Garcia, who spearheads the government agency's national sports association affairs, is ripe for the job and has the experience to run the show as the country's chef de mission.

SPORTSWATCH

Alex Wang Cup unwraps Saturday

THE 2007 MBT OPEN LEAGUE, DUBBED THE ALEX WANG CUP, UNWRAPS Saturday with 11 teams in tow at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong City. Fifth Avenue Telecoms will be defending its crown against 2006 MBT Corporate League champion Pacific Supertex Kings, CKP168, Fil-Can Ice, UP, De Ocampo, STI, ACSAT, MLQU, PMI and PCCr. Organized by Metro Basketball, the MBT Open is named after newly appointed MBT director Alex Wang. League commissioner is Nilo Fernandez. MBT has been recognized as the biggest corporate basketball league in Metro Manila with 114 team participants in 2005 and a record 236 teams last year. For info, call 6367638, text 09179948408 or visit website www.metrobasketball.net.


ORCOLLO SUPPORTER: World Pool League champion Dennis Orcollo (right) with Quezon City Councilor Majority Floor Leader Ariel Inton. The Quezon City government is supporting Orcollo in his 60-rack showdown against Taiwanese Yang Chin-shun on April 13-15.

Best summer basketball classes

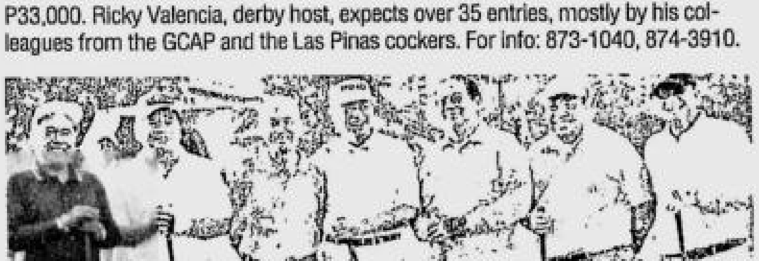
ENROLLMENT IS NOW OPEN FOR BEST CENTER'S SUMMER BASKETBALL classes. San Beda College holds sessions every Tuesday and Friday from April 10 to May 1, while Notre Dame of Greater Manila in Caloocan conducts classes from April 16 to May 4. Best Center's other venues are Xavier School (Greenhills), Ateneo College covered courts (Quezon City), Metropolis Mall (Alabang) and Star Mall@The Annex (Mandaluyong). Call 411-6260 and 372-3065.

Rambulan 8- cocker starts at SJC today

THOUSANDS OF AFICIONADOS CONVERGE TODAY AT SAN JUAN COLISEUM when the National Rambulan 8-cock derby starts at 5 p.m. The event, which dangles a guaranteed prize of P10.5 million but requires an entry fee of only P11,000, will feature the 2-cock elims today. "Its all systems go for the competition here in Metro Manila and in 22 other cockpits in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Even smalltime cockers can join," said organizers Rodolfo Pineda and Butch Nunez. A total of 107 entries so far were listed in the eliminations held at the Mabuhay Cockpit in Pampanga (Feb. 27) and San Luis Sports Complex in Samar (Feb. 28). Contact SJC pit manager Pete Rivera and 'Rambulan' executive assistant Ed Guevarra or call 725-5369; 725-6563, 0917-8041691 (Maricar) and 0917-8264018 (Maan).

LPC cockfest stakes P100,000

LAS PIÑAS COLISEUM WILL STAGE THE FASTEST WIN ONE-COCK TIMBANGAN beginning at 11 a.m. today with P100,000 at stake. Hosts Maruel Terrobias and Bacoor Cockers staked the following prizes: fastest win champion, P35,000; second, P20,000; third, P10,000; fourth to tenth placers, P5,000. Entries must be submitted from 7 to 10 a.m. Meanwhile, the Summer Bigtime 5- cock derby comes next at LPC on March 17 with P1 million at stake for an entry fee of P33,000. Ricky Valencia, derby host, expects over 35 entries, mostly by his colleagues from the GCAP and the Las Pinas cockers. For info: 873-1040, 874-3910.


FG GOLF: First Gentleman Miguel "Mike" Arroyo's team places second in the Class A Competition of the 2007 FG Golf Cup Invitational Tournament at the Wack Wack Golf & Country Club. His partners are Antonio Cabangon-Chua, Bangko Sentral Gov. Amando Tetangco, guest Finance Secretary Gary Teves, Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzalez, Gilberto Duavit and BIR Commissioner Jojo Bunag. MANDY NAVASERO

San Andres tops motocross

MULTI-TITLED RIDER KENNETH SAN ANdres ruled the premier Pro Open division of the 2007 San Fernando City La Union Invitational Motocross at the Barangay Viday, San Fernando City, La Union, recently.

The 2005 Rookie of the Year rider, a student of Manila Central University, thwarted the challenge of experienced rivals to buttressed his reputation as the country's best young rider. .

San Andres pulled off a half-a-lap win over Bebet dela Cruz (2nd), Donald Yuson (3rd), Jerry Beech (4th) and grizzled veteran Jovie Saulog in the one-day motocross festival sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association and sponsored by the local government headed by Mayor Mary Jane Ortega.

It would have been a double-victory for San Andres, who is backed by Oakley, HJC Helmets, Bridgestone Tires, Renthal, Alpine Star, Fox, Polisports, Inside Racing Magazine, JBS Motorcycle Parts and Accessories, had the chain of his racing machine did not give way in the early going of the Pro 125.

San Andres' teammate Jerrick Mitra topped the Junior 65cc category. McLean Aguilar, son of many-time national champion Glenn Aguilar, placed second in the Junior 50cc.

A four-time awardee of the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA), San Andres is looking forward to the first stop on March 25 of the FIM-Motocross Masters of Asia in Puerto Princesa, where he is one of the top draws, together with Aguilar.

"Kenneth has again proven his worth," said San Andres' father/coach Jun-Jun. "His performance is outstanding."

San Andres' development took a big turn when he trained in the US under motocross guru and former world champion Jim Gibson.

La Union Open stakes P.65M

THE RICH LA UNION OPEN CHESS CHAMPIonship gets going on March 3 to 9 at the Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol in the City of San Fernando, La Union, with P650,000 at stake.

TORRE

ESTIMO

Asia's first Grandmaster Eugene Torre and GM-Candidate Jayson Gonzales head the entries in the annual tournament jointly sponsored by Gov. Victor F. Ortega and City of San Fernando Mayor Mary Jane C. Ortega

Expected to provide them stiff competition are International Masters Barlo Nadera and Ronald Bancod and Fide Masters Adrian Ros Pacis, John Paul Gomez, Emmanuel Senador, Rolando Nolte, Roderick Nava, Anthony Makinano, Joel Pimentel and Jan Emmanuel Garcia.

Lawyer Samuel Estimo, executive director of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and project director of the longest running tournament outside of Metro Manila, said the champion will receive P100,000.

Also joining the chase for the lucrative prizes are National Masters Mirabeau Maga, Rudy Ibañez, Roberto Suelo Jr., Gary Villanueva and Mario Rebano as well as Philippine six-time executive champion Dr. Jenny Mayor.

"Eugene and Jayson's entry has added luster to the tournament, which has become one of the most anticipated local tournament in the country," said NCFP Region I chess coordinator engineer Joseph Dumuk.

Participants will be billeted at the Villa Estrella Beach Resorts hotel. The chief arbiter is IA Gene Poliarco. Interested parties may call (0915) 936-0354 and (0917) 611-6078, respectively. Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Esguerra Philtobo's big achiever again

By Musong R. Castillo

"WHEN I DO SOMETHING, I ALWAYS PUT my heart into it."

Hermie Esguerra said it was this principle that guided him as he again dominated the ninth Gintong Lahi awards by the Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization (Phltobo) Monday night.

The businessman-sportsman walked away with nine of the 15 awards handed out, including the highlight Owner and Breeder of the Year trophies and claiming ownership of the Horse of the Year through the irrepressible Real Spicy.

"I also feel that I owe it to the (racing) public (for me) to produce the best horses possible," Esguerra told the Inquirer. "I want to be able to continue producing champions, not for myself, but for the people."

The event, equivalent to the Eclipse Awards in the US, which was chaired by Manny Santos, is an annual activity of Philtobo.

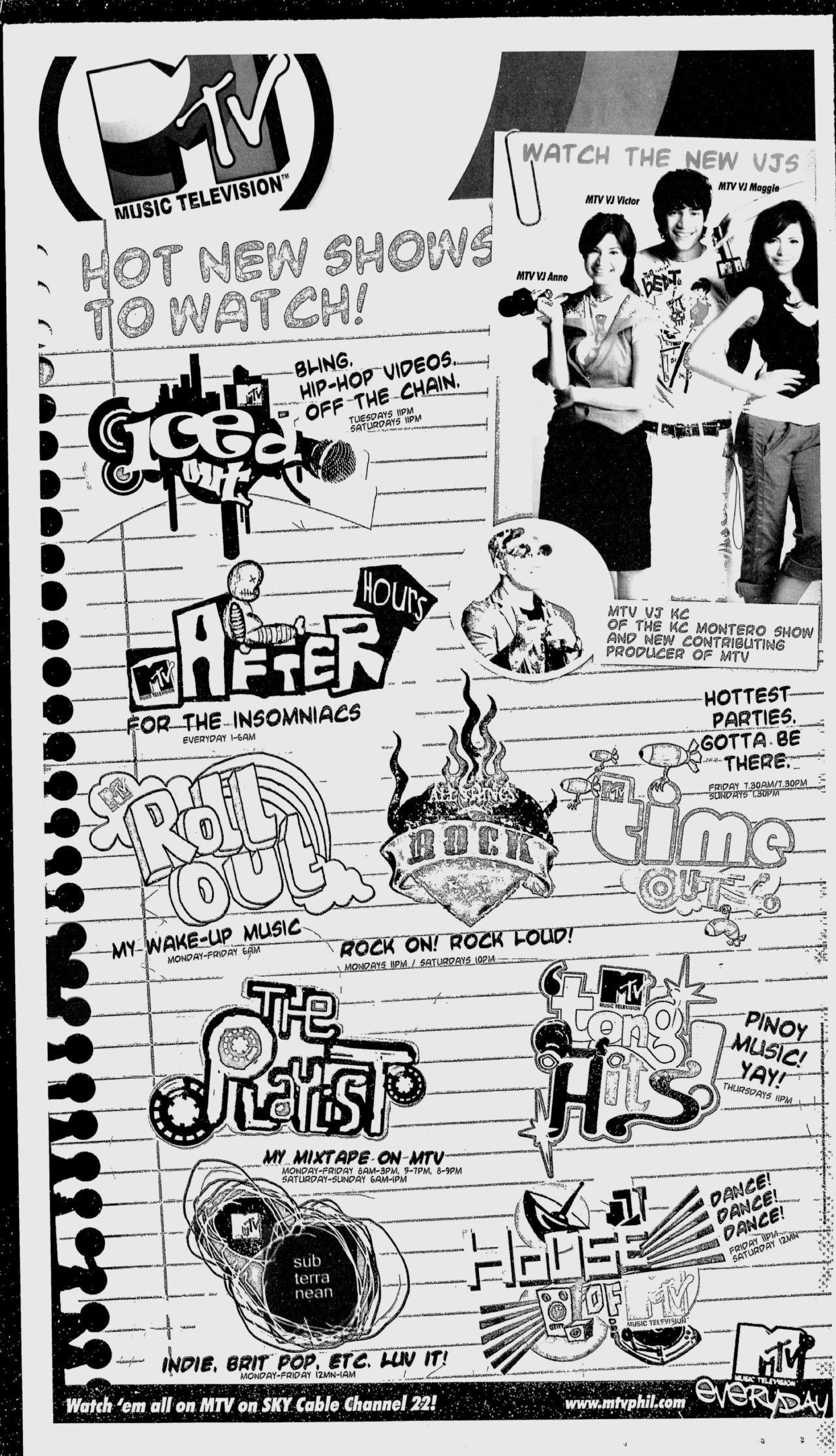
Just seven years in the industry, Esguerra emerged top owner for the fifth straight time, and was mildly surprised at winning the breeder of the year award over some of the more established names.

His other chargers, Defiant, Don Exequiel and Eurobucks were 2006's top two-year-old filly, 3-year-old colt and older filly/mare, respectively, while Account of Grace, which stands in stud at the Herma Farms, was named top stallion and Spicy Tale the top broodmare.

HERMIE Esguerra

Esguerra fielded entries in 572 races, winning 121, finishing second in 109 and third 79 times for a total take of P40.3 million. His horses won 17 stakes races last year.

Veteran conditioner Ruben Clor was named the trainer of the year with 47 wins, 12 in stakes races while Jonathan Hernandez won the Jockey of the Year award for the second straight year.



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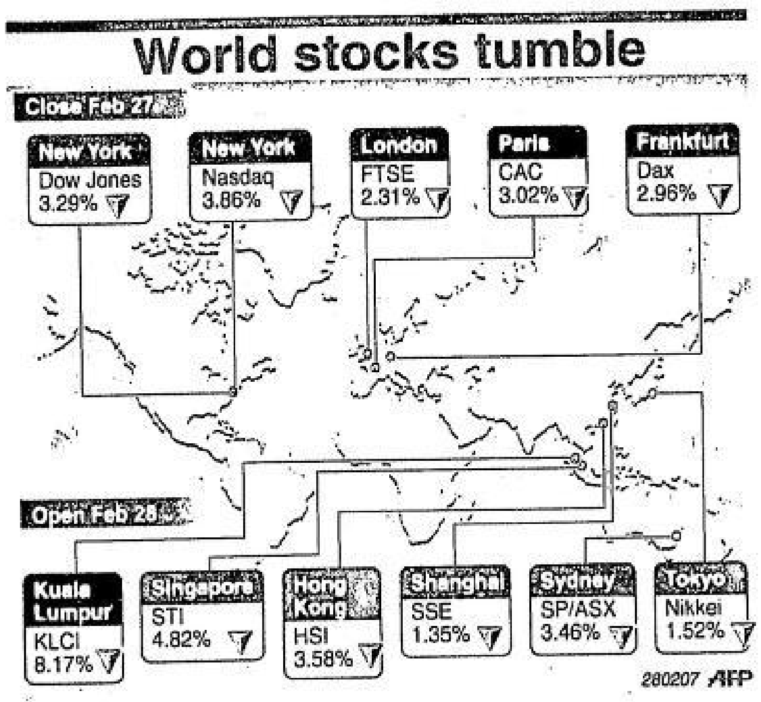
RP stocks tumble as world markets skid



Peso also weakens to 48.54 to a dollar

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO FALTERED TO AS LOW as 48.65 against the dollar before closing at 48.54 yesterday as a knee-jerk reaction to the steepest single-day fall in local and global equities markets seen since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States.

The local currency yesterday opened at the day's high of 48.48:$1 and fell throughout the

PESO/ B2

Wall Street's overnight slide causes more jitters

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LOCAL SHARE PRICES TUMBLED 7.92-PERCENT YESTERDAY IN a sharp reaction to skidding Asian markets, with the key index ending at its lowest level in six weeks, dealers said.

They said investors were rattled by the sell-off on Wall Street overnight that followed a sharp fall on the Shanghai market Tuesday on concerns that prices were over-inflated.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index tumbled 263.84 points or 7.9 percent to 3,067.45, its weakest close since Jan. 17, when it settled at 3,041.56.

This was the index's biggest percentage decline since Jan. 9, 1998, when the PSEi lost 8.33 percent, the PSE said.

It was also the biggest points decline since Feb. 28, 1990, when the old Makati and Manila stock exchanges adopted a new method in computing the index, the PSE said.

Losers overwhelmed gainers 159 to four, while six stocks were unchanged. Volume turnover swelled to 23.2 billion shares valued at P12.6 billion.

In mid-day trade, Shanghai appeared to have regained its composure and was trading steady.

"The sell-offs on the US and China markets have caused worldwide jitters. This is definitely a good reality check and for the Philippine market, it's the major correction that we have been waiting for," said Astro del Castillo at First Grade Holdings Inc.

Analysts said the Philippine economy remained stable and the drop could be a good chance for fund managers to start accumulating stocks before any upward correction.

"The country's economic fundamentals are solid because of the appropriate policies set by the government," said Ron Rodrigo, research head at Unicapital Securities.

"Investors are jittery all over the place," said Francisco Liboro, president of PCCI Securities, saying Tuesday's sell-off in China had triggered a chain reaction around the world.

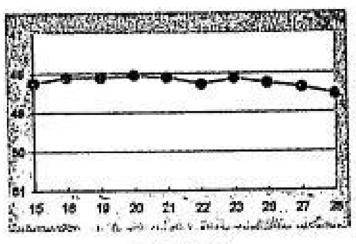
"We don't know how steep this slide will go ... how long the panic will last. But clearly at these levels there is some good buying opportunities," Liboro said.

Elsewhere, investors dumped Asian shares and emerging market bonds yesterday as a global sell-off that started in China gathered steam after Wall Street stocks shed more than 3 percent.

RP STOCKS/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



FEBRUARY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P48.54 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2007

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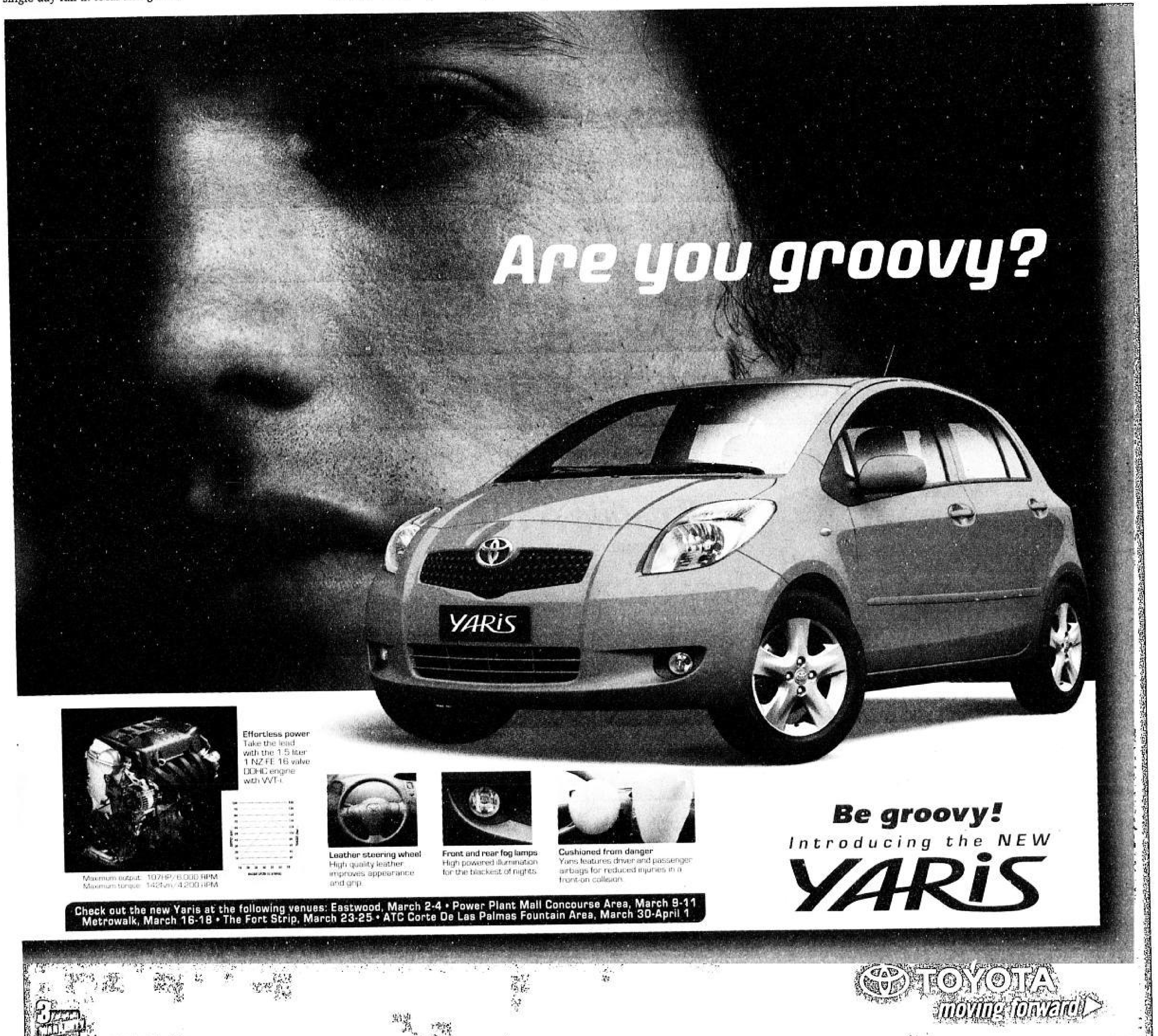

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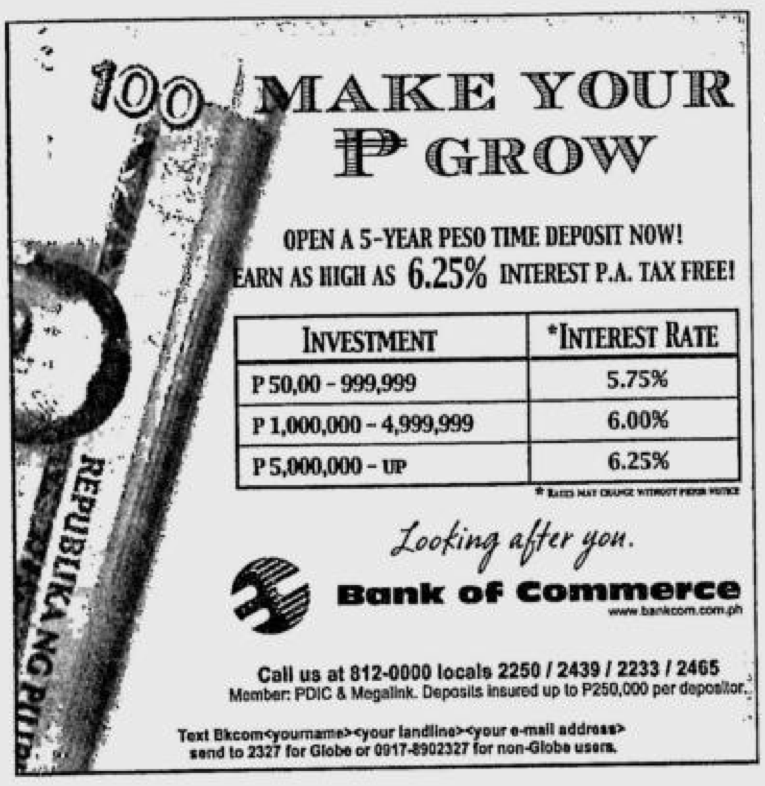

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MERCURY DRUG - OPERATION BIGAY LUNAS 2007

On March 1, 2007, Mercury Drug will celebrate its 62ND anniversary by conducting "OPERATION BIGAY LUNAS" (OBL) in 62 cities and municipalities nationwide. The OBL is an annual, all-day free consultations and medicines for indigent patients. It aims to serve 124,000 indigent patients this year. This undertaking will be made possible through the cooperation of its business partners, provincial governors, city and municipal mayors. This is a way of thanking its customers, who Continually patronize and support the company.

The "OPERATION BIGAY LUNAS" is a part of Mercury Drug's social contribution to improve the quality of healthcare in the community.

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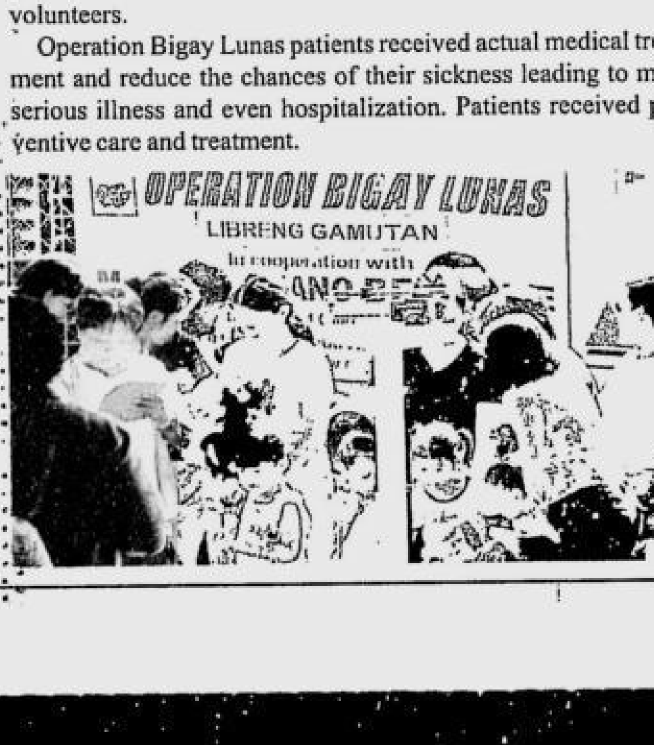
The "OPERATION BIGAY LUNAS" is a part of Mercury Drug's social contribution to improve the quality of healthcare in the community.

True to its commitment of helping keep the nation healthy, Mercury Drug, its business partners and local government units, once again carried out its annual Operation Bigay Lunas that benefited more than 120,000 indigents nationwide.

This is part of the company's effort to give to the people the gift of wellness as token of Mercury Drug's 62nd year and sincere appreciation.

Operation Bigay Lunas is a simultaneous, one-day free clinic that provides free medical consultations and medicines to indigents nationwide. Since its launching in 1999, Operation Bigay Lunas has provided healthcare services to at least one million indigents nationwide. It is also made possible by contributions of time from more than 1,200 volunteer doctors and non-medical volunteers.

Operation Bigay Lunas patients received actual medical treatment and reduce the chances of their sickness leading to more serious illness and even hospitalization. Patients received preventive care and treatment.



ADVT

Platinum's nickel exports stopped

Mining firm accused of overextraction

By Christine A. Gaylican

A REGIONAL TRIAL COURT HAS ISSUED AN order preventing Platinum Groups Metal Corp. from exporting some 300,000 metric tons of nickel mineral ore extracted from its mines in Palawan.

The Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 76 likewise ordered Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes to enforce the confiscation order against Platinum pending a decision on a petition filed by. Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.

Citinickel last year sought the cancellation of Platinum's operating agreement and environment compliance certificate because of alleged violations, such as over-extraction and the use of heavy equipment.

The DENR concurred with Citinickel's claim, on grounds that Platinum has exceeded the limit on small-scale mining now at 50,000 metric tons.

According to Citinickel's court petition, it "stands to be prejudiced and suffer immeasurably by the lifting of the seizure and confiscation order."

Citinickel claims to be the real owner of the mine site, and it had just entered into an operating agreement with Platinum, allowing the latter to mine at the area.

Citinickel argued that "the continued confiscation of the ores pending hearing of the case would not prejudice Platinum as a commodity the ores are not perishable."

Orion sells Pepsi shares

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

ORION BRANDS INTERNATIONAL INC. (OBII), a 100-percent owned unit of listed company Prime Orion Philippines Inc., has sold its 17.6-percent stake in soft drinks firm Pepsi-Cola Products Philippines Inc. (PCPPI) to a Singapore hedge fund for $21.1 million.

In a disclosure, Prime Orion said OBII sold the shares to The Nassim Fund, a Singapore-based fund which invests in Asia-Pacific equities.

PCPPI is the local franchise holder of popular soft drink brand Pepsi.

PNOC approves plan to invest ₱1.26B in alternative energy

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NEWEST SUBSIDIARY OF STATE-FIRM Philippine National Oil Co. is pushing ahead with investments and other projects related to biofuels after the PNOC board approved its budget for 2007 of P1.257 billion.

The amount covers PNOC Alternative Fuels Corp.'s plan to set aside P680 million for the establishment of "mega-nurseries" for seedlings of Jatropha or tuba-tuba, from which an oil for biodiesel can be extracted.

"We are upbeat about Jatropha and we aim to become the most prominent alternative fuels-producing company," company president Peter Anthony Abaya said in a statement.

Abaya said PNOC-AFC wanted to put up this year its own Jatropha mega-nurseries using a total area of 1,000 hectares in various areas in Mindanao.

Aside from that, 500 hectares more would be developed at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija with the help of the Philippine Army.

"The mega-nurseries will serve not only as sources of seedlings for the commercial plantations but will also be used for research and development on propagation methods, provenance testing, intercropping, and effective management practices," Abaya explained.

He added that locally sourced Jatropha planting materials would be used in the projects.

Further, Abaya said PNOC-AFC also planned to put in an investment share in a planned biodiesel refinery.

He did not elaborate.

The remainder of PNOC-AFC's budget for this year covers P411.36 million in operating expenses and P165.67 million in other capital expenditures.

Abaya said such expenses included research and development, information campaign, and corporate social responsibility projects.

PNOC-AFC was created with a mandate to spearhead the implementation of the government's Biofuels Project, primarily through development work.

One of Biofuels Project's goals is to reduce the country's dependence on imported sources of energy.

SM opens Bacolod mall

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—SM PRIME HOLDINGS Inc. will open on Friday a shopping mall in the city, the retail chain's 29th.

The 60,000-sq.m. SM City Bacolod is located on a 16-hectare property at a reclaimed area near the harbor of Guimaras Strait.

This year, SM Prime plans to spend P7 billion on the construction of four new malls and the expansion of three existing malls.

The other malls opening later this year include the SM City Taytay, SM Supercenter Muntinlupa and a strip mall called the Sunset Strip at the Esplanade, fronting the Manila Bay and right across the SM Mall of Asia in the SM Bay City complex.

SM Bacolod's interior showcases colorful murals by Fritz Infante, who drew inspiration from Bacolod's MassKara Festival, the company said in a statement.

The new mall has a supermarket, cinemas and restaurants.

Peso ...

From page B1

day, shedding 16 centavos from Tuesday's finish of 48.38 to the dollar on heavy volume of $677 million as the regional financial markets were spooked by heavy sell-offs in China's equities market.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. senior vice president Marcelo Ayes said he was even expecting a retracement of the peso-dollar rate to the 48.70-75 level at the Philippine Dealing System yesterday but noted that "any rally of the dollar will simply be an opportunity for short (sell position)."

He said the long-term uptrend for the peso was still intact.

"There was flight to quality and a temporary shift from emerging markets because of fears of an asset bubble in China," Ayes said.

Ayes cited offshore jitters that assets in China may now be too inflated due to speculative positioning which, in turn, pushed some investors to unload Chinese equities and shift to US treasuries.

"So, emerging markets were affected in various degrees. In our case, the stock market was susceptible because it's trading at (10-year) highs and seasonally, investors really tend to grab any excuse to take profits before the Lenten season," Ayes said.

"The ROPs (Philippine global bonds) were also slightly affected not because of the correlation to emerging markets but due to knee-jerk reaction," he noted, adding that people would still likely resume buying ROPs which remained attractive to due to scarcity of supply.

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intel Centrino Duo Core 2 Duo Inside

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0701, Series of 2007
Promo Period: Feb 15 - Mar 31, 2007.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 28, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11.5	11.5	10.5	10.5	471,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58	58	55.5	55.5	3,589,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	65.5	61.5	62	3,559,800
China Banking Corp.	895	895	850	890	5,840
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	20	19.75	20	3,400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.58	0.58	0.52	0.56	30,450,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	102	100	100	110,150
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	63.5	63.5	59	61.5	6,272,600
Philippine National Bank	52	52	50	50	146,000
Phil. Savings Bank	62	62	59.5	59.5	18,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	40	40	37	39	932,100
Security Bank Corp.	83	83	78	78	74,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	64.5	64.5	60.5	60.5	11,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	170,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.6	6.6	6	6.4	2,345,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	37.5	35.5	37	11,500
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.02	2.02	155,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	790	790	650	750	20,750
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2055	2060	600
Ivantage Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	4,674,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.4	5.9	5.2	5.8	142,727,000
First Gen Corp.	54	54	51	51	1,700,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	72.5	75.5	72.5	75.5	1,000,500
Manila Electric Co. A	74	74	69	71.5	482,100
Manila Electric Co. B	47.5	73	47.5	71.5	4,478,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.4	9.1	9.3	8,112,000
Petron Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.35	4.4	18,018,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	2,040,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	5,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.36	2,307,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	81,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24	25.5	24	25	114,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	52	52	48	50	1,654,600
RFM Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.46	749,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	162,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.4	0.4	1,160,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65	65	63	64	29,600
San Miguel Corp. B	76	76	74	75	179,500
Alliance Tuna Int'l, Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.04	2.06	3,052,000
Universal Robina Corp.	16.75	18	16.75	17.25	3,962,700
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.76	1.6	1.64	55,455,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.25	4.4	11,514,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.3	7.7	8.2	1,753,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.9	5.9	4.7	4.7	82,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	1,173,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5	4.8	5	8,947,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.67	0.75	0.67	0.75	130,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.39	0.3	0.35	83,460,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	464,400,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	141,500,000
Atok-Big Wedge.,Inc. B	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	2,000
Ayala Corp.	590	590	550	560	499,180
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.61	0.77	510,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8.2	7.7	8.2	13,922,000
AJO.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.065	0.065	40,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.1	3.15	2.7	3.1	3,817,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.36	0.36	12,810,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.012	0.014	872,200,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.2	1.26	11,840,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.7	3.85	413,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	5.5	6.4	5.1	6	3,125,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	69,900
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.75	3.15	3.5	73,954,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7	7	6.5	6.5	2,081,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.3	5.3	5	5.2	4,771,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	8,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,450,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.8	1,242,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	13	10.5	12.25	2,471,000
Medco Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.38	1,180,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.8	10.5	8.8	10	5,887,900
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.04	2.04	1.76	1.92	1,743,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.25	0.28	46,260,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.22	0.225	0.185	0.2	91,100,000
SM Investments Corp.	340	362.5	320	352.5	378,640
South China Resources Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.12	1.14	1,130,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.6	1.6	521,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.2	0.13	0.2	2,350,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15	15.75	14.5	15.25	43,098,900
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	470,000
Belle Corp.	1.4	1.46	1.38	1.38	39,283,000
A. Brown Co. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.22	1.22	1,422,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.3	120,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.46	5,890,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	102,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.44	2.44	1,965,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	7,900,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	770,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.88	0.75	0.84	199,090,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	554,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	20,800,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	1.56	1.74	1.56	1.68	140,867,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	630,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.24	0.28	0.24	0.28	300,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.65	2.8	2.5	2.8	516,000
Interport Res.	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.011	384,800,000
Interport Res. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	104,200,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.53	0.53	0.49	0.5	4,940,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.89	0.92	0.86	0.87	9,930,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.7	3.05	2.6	3.05	254,544,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	3.25	4.7	3.25	4.6	120,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.5	0.59	0.5	0.55	14,140,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.19	0.19	2,220,000
Polar Property Holdings	3.05	3.05	2.65	2.65	188,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.5	19.5	18	18.5	8,653,900
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.61	0.66	0.6	0.65	46,890,000
SM Development Corp.	4.25	4.25	3.8	4	3,088,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11	11.25	10.75	11	16,642,800
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.78	0.79	0.73	0.75	2,270,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.155	0.125	0.14	27,070,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22	23	22	22.75	92,900
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.86	1.88	1.74	1.84	26,088,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1345	1345	1285	1295	58,580
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7	7.1	6.6	7	12,324,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2400	2400	2285	2320	692,410
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.22	0.28	19,160,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	10,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	33,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.48	2.48	2.38	2.4	667,000
Ipvg Corp.	5.9	5.9	5	5.6	6,846,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	14,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	32,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.48	1.5	1,147,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.36	655,000
Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.05	0.045	0.046	1,010,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	24,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	20.5	29	20.5	29	3,069,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.16	600,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	20,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.9	3	2.6	2.85	6,777,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.88	0.99	0.88	0.94	3,935,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.5	419,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.55	3	2.55	2.75	8,556,000
Paxys Inc.	28	28	26.5	27	1,602,900
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	40	40	40	40	101,300
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	26,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	10,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6	6.2	5.7	6	1,680,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.1	6.2	6	6	1,509,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.012	2,417,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.8	9	8.5	8.7	4,108,000
Benguet Corp. A	12	12.25	11.25	11.75	226,900
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	100,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc	1.58	1.82	1.54	1.7	198,589,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.3	0.26	0.28	112,840,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.33	52,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.029	0.026	0.028	2,333,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.033	0.029	0.033	1,136,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.017	0.02	0.017	0.019	8,403,200,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4	4.2	3.85	4.1	41,510,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	16	18	16	17.75	151,600
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.73	0.77	0.68	0.71	1,250,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.24	1.24	1.16	1.18	13,740,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	8,750,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	905,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	74,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	792,600,000
PNOC Exploration Corp.-B	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	3,300
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.6	9.7	287,000

CURRENCIES

February 28, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.755116	1.000000	48.2870
Japan	Yen	0.006404	0.008481	0.4095
United Kingdom	Pound	1.480631	1.960800	94.6811
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096637	0.127977	6.1796
Switzerland	Franc	0.619964	0.821018	39.6445
Canada	Dollar	0.647112	0.856971	41.3806
Singapore	Dollar	0.494412	0.654750	31.6159
Australia	Dollar	0.598349	0.792393	38.2623
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.003119	2.652731	128.0924
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201364	0.266667	12.8765
Brunei	Dollar	0.492799	0.652614	31.5128
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022177	0.029369	1.4181
UAE	Dirham	0.205653	0.272346	13.1508
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.324300	63.9465
Korea	Won	0.000805	0.001066	0.0515
China	Yuan**	0.097541	0.129174	6.2374
Argentina	Peso	0.243390	0.322321	15.5639
Brazil	Real	0.358895	0.475285	22.9501
Denmark	Kroner	0.134250	0.177787	8.5848
India	Rupee	0.017138	0.022696	1.0959
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216118	0.286205	13.8200
Mexico	New Peso	0.067455	0.089330	4.3135
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531509	0.703878	33.9882
South Africa	Rand	0.104761	0.138735	6.6991
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022920	0.030353	1.4657

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 27, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 27, 2007

RP stocks tumble . . .

From page B1

Spooked by Tuesday's collapse in Chinese stocks and weak US manufacturing data, investors fled to safety, pouring money into less-risky bonds and sending the Dow Jones Industrial Average down in its worst slide in point terms since the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

Worried Chinese investors flocked to brokerages yesterday, even as Shanghai's main index crawled into positive territory after opening 1.34-percent lower.

Other Asian indexes mirrored the US decline, with Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index falling 2.9 percent and the H-share index of Chinese shares listed in Hong Kong losing 4.9 percent.

Asian credits recovered after an initial sell-off, but were still weaker.

US crude oil dropped more than one percent, while spot gold fell to its lowest level in a week before rebounding.

Japan's Nikkei average lost 3.15 percent, Australia's benchmark S&P/ASX 200 index fell 2.34 percent and Seoul's KOSPI shed 3.25 percent.

"The real question is whether New York will be able to rebound tonight. If it doesn't, investors are going to start looking for the reasons behind all this selling," said Tatsutyuki Kawasaki, director of equities trading at Kaneyama Securities.

US stock index futures signaled a slightly higher opening yesterday as markets appeared ready to shake off declines. Standard & Poor's 500 Index futures were up 2.7 points, while Dow Jones industrial average futures were 17 points higher and Nasdaq 100 futures were unchanged.

MSCI's measure of Asia Pacific stocks fell as much as 3.5 percent, suffering its biggest drop since June 2006. The index hit a record high earlier this week.

Most markets in Southeast Asia saw their biggest one-day drops since the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, with Singapore's Straits Times Index falling 5.57 percent.

"I honestly think it's a tad of an overreaction to China and a tad of an overreaction to what happened to the US durable goods orders," said Hans Kunnen, head of investment market research at Colonial First State in Sydney.

"The global economic environment is still relatively firm, as we've seen in our own reporting season, corporate earnings are strong ... and many people will see this as a buying opportunity."

Fears of rising volatility in financial markets also prompted investors to buy yen as they unwound risky so-called carry trades that had involved borrowing in the Japanese currency.

The yen logged its biggest daily jump against the dollar in a year on Tuesday before retreating slightly yesterday.

Carry trades involve borrowing in a low-yielding currency—for instance, Japanese interest rates are 0.5 percent—and using the funds to invest in a higher-yielding currency. As traders have closed out trades in the higher-yielding markets, they have bought back yen to pay off the original borrowings.

Many in the market had warned that global investors were inadequately pricing in risk. Before this week, emerging market bond spreads, which measure the gap against ultra-safe US Treasuries, were at record lows. In other words, investors were not demanding a hefty yield premium even for such risky assets.

"It will be a temporary increase in risk aversion—we will see a correction and it may last for a very short period. We look at it as a good opportunity to reload on the high-yield universe in Asia," said Scott Wilson, sovereign credit analyst at UBS. *With reports from AFP, Reuters*

Megaworld earmarks ₱33B for BPO project

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

OFFICE AND CONDOMINIUM developer Megaworld Corp. will spend P33 billion over the next 5-7 years to make the 50-hectare McKinley Hill, its mixed-use village in Fort Bonifacio, a haven for business process outsourcing firms.

It will also set aside P3 billion to develop the project's commercial components and another P18 billion is projected for the residential component, including McKinley Hill Village, which is being promoted by Megaworld as "The Most Beautiful Village in Metro Manila."

The first BPO building, dubbed One World Square, will be Megaworld's first in area.

"McKinley Hill in Fort Bonifacio provides clients easy access to Makati and Ortigas and the airport via C-5 and Edsa. It is ideal for companies that are looking for another location that's comparable to and offers significant business advantages like the pioneering Eastwood City," said Megaworld chair Andrew Tan.

The BPO building will consist of 11 stories and provide 30,000 square meters of office space. It is also the first office tower to feature varying floor plates: The second to fifth floor offices with 5,000 square meters and the 6th-7th floors, 2,000 square meters. The top four floors provide floor plates of 700 square meters.

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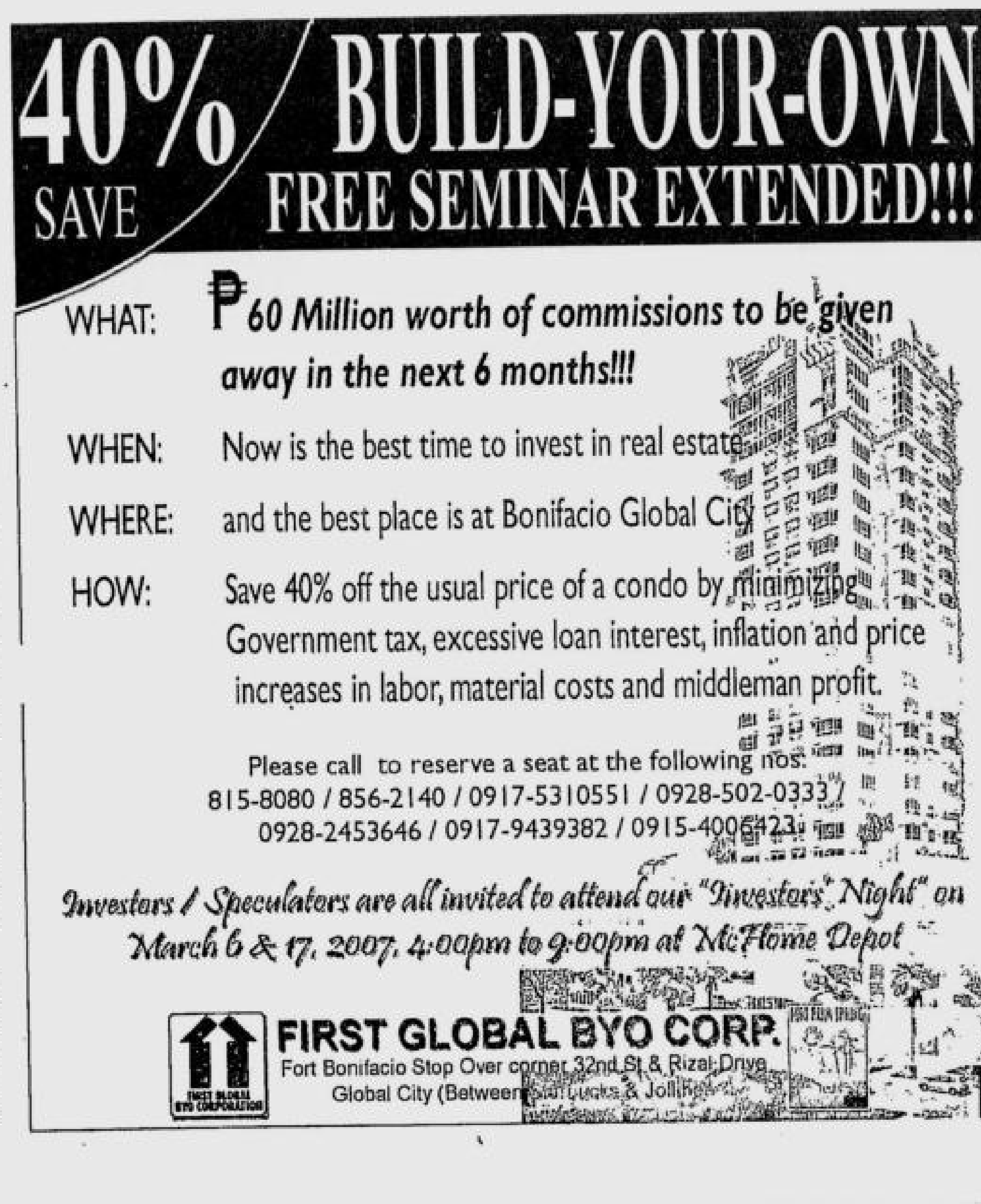

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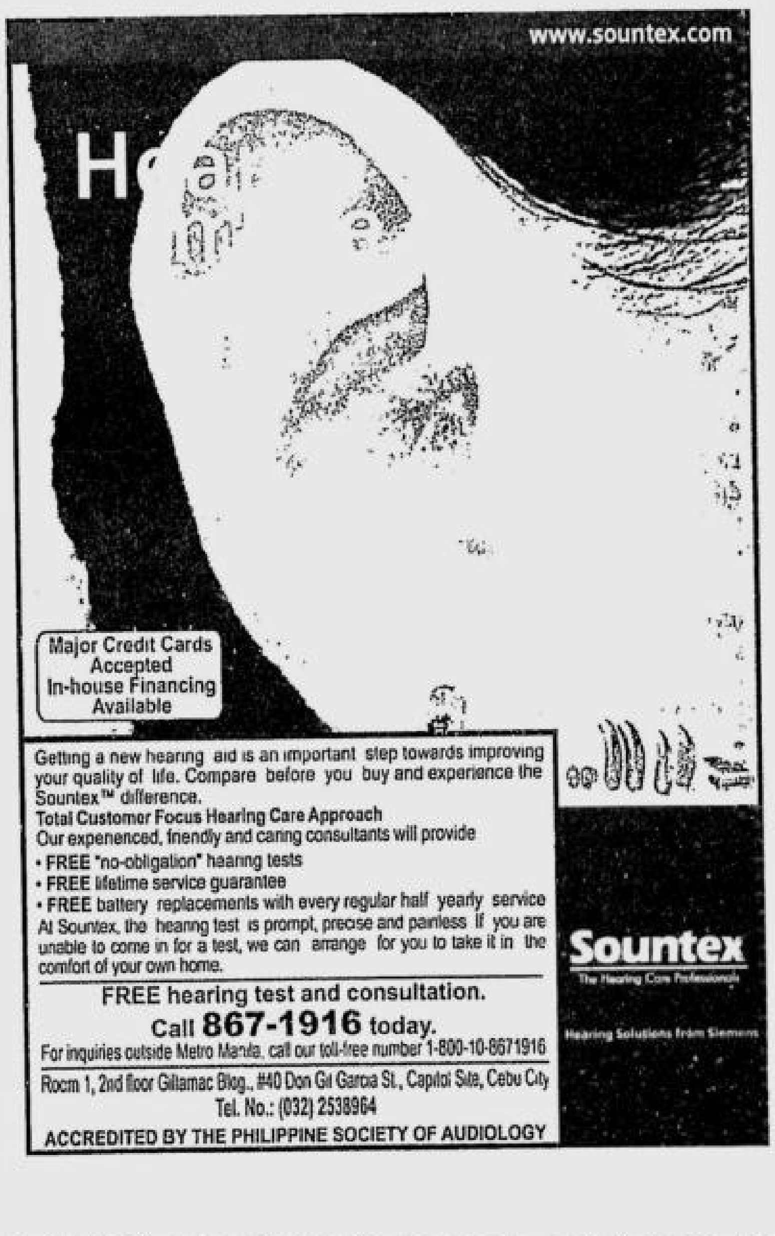

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
MARCUS EVANS (PHILIPPINES), INC. 4/F Rufino Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Adrian Foo Chee Ming	Sales Manager
PHILMAKKI FOUNDATION INC. 7/F Electra House, Esteban St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Masaaki Ouchi	Chairman
THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION MANILA, INC. 22/F Trident Tower, 312 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Makoto Ogawa	Secretary-General
G&S INTERTRADE CORP. (VOV COSMETIC SUPPLY) Unit 19, Rothman Hotel, 1633 Adriatico St., Malate Manila	Seungjae Lee	Operation Manager
SUMITOMO MITSUI CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD. 2/F Pioneer House Bldg., Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Shigeo Hanaki	Senior Project Manager
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & INNOVATION CONSULTING, INC. 10/F IBM Plaza, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	Earl Edward Foust III	Corporate Business Trainer
LINEARWORKS CORPORATION 530 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City	Noboru Shibue	General Manager
NO KA OI PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 708 Richville Corporate Center, 1314 Commerce Ave., Ext., Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Paul Quintin Romias, Jr.	Technical Consultant
CCT CONSTRUCTORS CORPORATION 3/F Princess Bldg., 104 Esteban St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Yoshitaka Okazaki	Assistant Building Construction Manager
OBAYASHI CORPORATION Rm. 907, 9/F National Life Insurance Bldg., 6752 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jun Homma	Senior Site Engineer
SAMWON RESTAURANT 226 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Hyun Sook Kim	General Manager
SEIKO IT SOLUTION PHILIPPINES, INC. 28/F Antel Global Corp. Ctr. Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Kikuma Kanemitsu	President
ROBERT BOSCH, INC. J4/F L.V. Locsin Bldg., 6752 Ayala Ave., cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Mustafa Sed	General Manager
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Narayanan Kothandaraman	Functional Analyst

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI – March 1, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

INVITATION TO BID

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) through the Bids and Awards Committee for the Old Iloilo Airport (BAC-Old Iloilo Airport) invites interested proponents to participate in a public bidding for the approximately 54 hectares Old Iloilo Airport lot located in Mandurriao, Iloilo City.

Interested proponents may, at no cost, obtain the Terms of Reference for the Sale of the 54 Hectares Old Iloilo Airport, Mandurriao, Iloilo City (TOR) from the BAC-Old Iloilo Airport at the addresses indicated below beginning on 01 March 2007. After reviewing the TOR, proponents interested to participate in the bid must submit a Letter of Interest and purchase the bid package from the BAC-Iloilo Airport at a non-refundable fee of P 25,000.00 payable by check to the Department of Finance. The bid package includes forms of all documents required to participate in the bid, as well as detailed information about the Old Iloilo Airport.

BAC-Old Iloilo Airport-Manila Department of Finance 5/F, DOF Bldg., BSP Complex Roxas Blvd., Manila Tel: (02) 524 1633 Fax: (02) 523 5143 Contact: James Chin	Iloilo City Hall Plaza Libertad St., Iloilo City Tel: (033) 337 5026 e-mail: banoymir@yahoo.com Contact: Atty. Giovanni Alfonso Miraflores

Pre-bid conferences open to all interested parties will be held on the following dates and locations:

Date	Time	Location
13 March 2007 (Tuesday)	2:00 p.m.	City Budget Office Conference Room COA Building Plaza Libertad Street Iloilo City
15 March 2007 (Thursday)	2:00 p.m.	5/F DOF Building Department of Finance BSP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, cor. Pablo Ocampo Manila

The indicative timetable for the bid is as follows:

01-Mar-07	TOR and bid package available to all interested parties
13-Mar-07	Pre-bid conference – Iloilo
15-Mar-07	Pre-bid conference – Manila
27-Mar-07	Deadline for buying bid package
27-Mar-07	Deadline for submission of pre-qualification requirements and comments to transaction documents
03-Apr-07	Notification of eligibility to eligible bidders
10-Apr-07	Release of final transaction documents
24-Apr-07	Bid date
09-May-07	Target for issuance of Notice of Award
24-May-07	Target closing date

Any questions may be addressed to the BAC-Old Iloilo Airport - Manila at the address and/or telephone number indicated above.

(Sgd.) **John P. Sevilla**
BAC Chairman

(PDI– March 1, 2 & 5, 2007)

NORTHEASTERN LUZON PACIFIC
COASTAL SERVICE INC.
7th Floor, WESTAR Bldg., 611 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Northeastern Luzon Pacific Coastal Service Inc. (NLPCSI), thru its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Purchase of one (1) unit COASTAL SERVICE FACILITY/ PASSENGER-DEEP SEA VESSEL
Location	: Pasig City
Brief Description	: Type: Closed; Built; 1985; Classifications: LACS; L.O.A. – 33M; Breadth: 10.50M; Depth: 3.50M; Draft: 2.50M Summer; Gross Tonnage: 530 Tons; Passenger Capacity : 245 (Pullman Seats); Car/Cargo Capacity: 20 Cars; Main Engines; 2 units, 559 KW each, 1800 RPM; Genset: 2 units, output 45 KVA each; Speed: 11 knots; Bowthruster: one (1) unit Hydraulic (Fitted)
Approved Budget	: P 56,500,000.00
Source of Fund	: Domestic Shipping Modernization Program (DSMP) Sustainable Logistics Development Program (SLDP)
Contract Duration	:
Delivery Period	. To be determined during the Pre-Bid Conference

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The BAC will use the non-discretionary "Pass/Fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 08-14, 2007, 8:00 to 5:00 P.M., excluding Sat-Sun; Deadline on March 14, 2007 at the BAC Secretariat
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 15, 2007, 2:00 P.M. at the Conference Room, Provincial Capitol Bldg., Province of Isabela, Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela
3. Submission and Opening of Bids	March 27, 2007, 10:30 A.M. at the Office of the President & CEO, 7th Floor, Westar Bldg., 611 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City
4. Bid Evaluation	March 28, 2007
5. Post-qualification	March 29, 2007
6. Issuance of Notice of Award	March 30, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP 60,000.00 to the cashier of the corporation at the 7/F Westar Building, 611 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, Philippines. NLPCSI assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the presentation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **MA. THERESA A. FLORES**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 01, 2007)

Section I. Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Contract for the Supply of One (1) unit Infrared Thermal Imaging Camera and Accessories

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for the CY 2006 intends to apply the sum of **Php 2,400,000.00** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply of One (1) unit Infrared Thermal Imaging Camera and Accessories.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The PEZA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) and certified copy of Phil-GEPS Certificate of Registration from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of Infrared Thermal Imaging Camera and Accessories.
3. Bidders should have completed a single similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC within the last three (3) years and met the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on 02 March 2007 to 16 March 2007.**
5. Interested bidders may submit their LOIs, certified copy of their Phil-GEPS Certificate of Registration and e-FPS enrollment **not later than 16 March 2007** at the address given below and secure the complete set of Bidding Documents therefrom upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Php 2,000.00.**
6. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
7. The PEZA will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference on 03 April 2007 at 2:00 PM** at the address given below.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **2:00 p.m. of 16 April 2007.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in an amount of not less than 1% of the ABC. Late Bids shall not be accepted. **Bid opening shall be on 16 April 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the address given below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above date/s is declared as a non-working holiday it will automatically be rescheduled on the next working day (same time).
10. Completion of the Works is required within **thirty (30) calendar days** from date of receipt of the Notice to Proceed.
11. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

MACTAN ECONOMIC ZONE
6015 Lapu-Lapu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 340-0590 to 93
Fax Nos. (032) 340-0594 to 95
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **BELENA B. SUELLO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 1 & 15, 2007)

BCDA

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM – PHASE 3

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) is inviting interested proponents to participate in Phase 3 of BCDA's Asset Disposition Program (ADP Phase 3), particularly the **resumption of the disposition of the development and privatization of the approximately 2,632 square meter Campus Gateway property** located in Bonifacio Global City.

Interested proponents may submit their Letters of Interest to BCDA and can purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR) for bidding for the development and privatization of Campus Gateway that outlines, among others, the requirements that will enable proponents to participate in the privatization.

The TOR for Campus Gateway will be ready for distribution to interested proponents from 01 to 13 March 2007 at the BCDA Corporate Center. A non-refundable fee of PhP5,000.00 is charged for the TOR and payable to the BCDA in Cash or Manager's Check.

A Conference among interested proponents is tentatively set on 14 March 2007 (10:00 a.m.) at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2nd Floor, Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. The objective of the conference is to discuss the property, the TOR, and other clarifications from interested proponents.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to:

THE CHAIRMAN
Asset Disposition Program Committee – 3
Bases Conversion and Development Authority
BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center
31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City
E-mail Address: **arzosa@bcda.gov.ph** or **blandal@bcda.gov.ph**

or they can contact Ms. Aileen Zosa or Ms. Bambie Andal at telephone numbers 816-6666 or 816-1043.

(Sgd.) **VICTOR V. ZABLAN**
Chairman
ADP Phase 3 Committee

(PDI–March 1 & 8, 2007)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES LOS BAÑOS
College, Laguna 4031
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)
(For supplies, materials, equipment and non-personal services)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Reference No.: UPLB-026-07

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to submit bids for the following item.

Item	End-User	Approved Budget
Laboratory Equipment	ADSC-AND	2,500,000.00

Interested parties may secure the bidding documents from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat (BAC-Sec) Office at the International House complex, UP Los Baños. The bid forms may also be downloaded either from UPLB website (**http//admin.uplb.edu.ph/bac) or PhilGEPS (https://www.philgeps.net.GEPS).** Bidding fee of P2,000.00 shall be required from the bidders payale upon securing of the bid documents from the BAC-SEC Office or upon submission of eligibility requirements or on the day of submission/opening of bids.

The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

Particulars	Date/Time	Place
Issuance of Bid Documents	Starts on February 28, 2007 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM	BAC-SEC
Pre-Bidding Conference	March 7, 2007; 2:00 PM	BAC-SEC
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	On or Before March 21, 2007 2:00 PM	BAC-SEC
Submission/Opening of Bids	March 21, 2007; 2:00 PM	BAC-SEC

The UPLB reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Inquiries may be forwarded to Alexis C. del Rosario, Chair, BAC-Secretariat at telephone nos. (49) 536-8419 or 536-8420.

(Sgd.) **ARSENIO N. RESURRECCION**
Chair BAC

(PDI – March 1, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

EDELIZA M. ORACION,
MARY ROSE M. ORACION
and CATHERINE M. ORACION,
Petitioners,
-vesus-
FLOTILLA M. BALISBIS and
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Respondents.
x-----------------------------------x

SSC Case No. 7-16902-06

SUMMONS

TO : FLOTILLA M. BALISBIS

GREETINGS:

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS Makati Building, 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Rufino Street, Makati City, your answer to the petition filed by EDELIZA M. ORACION, MARY ROSE M. ORACION and CATHERINE M. ORACION, for entitlement to the benefit accruing from the death of SSS member Efren Oracion.

You are further required to serve a copy of your answer upon the Petitioners, through counsel, Atty. ANTONIO R. ROQUE, with address located at Wawa, Balagtas, Bulacan and upon the SSS thru Atty. GERARDO M.S. JACOBO of SSS Tarlac Branch Office, Macabulos Drive, San Vicente, Tarlac City, Tarlac.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or *motu-proprio*, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence *ex-parte* and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED.

Makati City, Philippines, **February 21, 2007.**

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - March 1, 2007)

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Tel No.: 854 4917-19 Fax No.: 831 9507

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget
654 Pcs. 14K Gold Ring	P9,221,400.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department (ProcD) starting March 1, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P4,700.00.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at ProcD Conference Room on March 8, 2007 at 2:00 PM, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila. Bidding for the above requirement is scheduled on March 21, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes placed in single outer envelope and sealed accordingly in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the ProcD-Requisitions Management Division at telephone no. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI – March 1, 2007)

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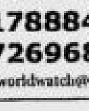

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One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek:
"To dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life."
Psalms 7:4

ELISA "Eling" AGUSTIN VIOLAGO

of Cruz na Daan, San Rafael, Bulacan

passed away at 9:10 a.m. on Wednesday, 28 February 2007
at the age of 91.

The bereaved family: her late husband **Miguel**; children and in-laws: **Genny** & **Peping Baltazar**; **Crising "Boy"** (†) & **Malou, Cristy**; **Aveling** & **Loida, Estrella** (†); **Neneng** & **Lando Alejandria**; **Ellen** & **Raul Maglalang**; grandchildren, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Cruz na Daan, San Rafael, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 04, 2007 at San Roque Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass at the Diocesan Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Cruz na Daan, San Rafael, Bulacan.

CLASSIFIEDS

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF ALABAMA
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF AUTAUGA COUNTY
Case No. 07-032

In re: The petition of Evangeline Guerrero Jones to change the name of Duncan Guerrero

PETITIONER'S NOTICE OF HEARING

To: Danie Rodriguez & Unknown Father
Father of Minor Child

Take notice, a Petition for change of Name for Minor has been filed in said Court by Mother of Minor, and May 1, 2007 at 3:30 o'clock p.m. has been set for hearing on same in said Court in the City of Prattville, Alabama.

Be advised, if you intend to contest name change, you must file a written response within thirty (30) days with the Probate Court, 176 West Fifth Street, Prattville, Alabama 36067-3041.

Done this 22nd day of February, 2007.

(Sgd.) ALFRED Q. BOOTH, Judge of Probate

(PDI--March 1, 8 & 15, 2007)

UCPB Savings

NOTICE OF DEFERMENT

UCPB SAVINGS BANK, INC.
ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING

The annual stockholders meeting of UCPB Savings Bank, Inc. scheduled on March 6, 2007 has been deferred until further notice.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. JOSE A. BARCELON**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--March 1, 2007)

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UP Street Dance Club's homecoming

HEAR THE BEAT, FEEL THE GROOVE, AND EXPERIENCE THE PASSION to the tenth power as the UP Street Dance Club celebrates its 10th year anniversary dance concert entitled, Street Fuzion 7 Homecoming: Back-'N D' Hood. Witness the talent of the dance group that currently holds the championship title in the 2003 Green Cross Funky Fragrance Dance Competition, Dancelebration 2006, and back-to-back champions of the Skechers Street-dance Competition. It has also been a two-time representative of the country to the World Hiphop Championships in LA, California. Catch them in action on March 3, 2007, 7 P.M., at the UP Theater. Proceeds of the event will go to the Club's scholarship program D.A.N.C.E, or Dancers Aiming to be Nurtured through Comprehensive Education. For ticket inquiries text Kriska at 09173966952.

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LAMBERTO "Bobby" V. DE OCAMPO

Returned to the loving embrace of our Lord
on February 27, 2007 at the age of 56.

His bereaved wife **Marilyn**, children **Skippy** and **Bambina**, brothers **Tito** (†) and **Butch**, sisters **Heidi**, **Cecile** (†) and **Sonjie**, and his other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His cremated remains lie in state at the Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Inurnment will be on Friday, March 2, 2007, at Manila Memorial Park, after the 9 a.m. Mass.

LETICIA MARIN GANIBAN

of Calumpit, Bulacan

Peacefully joined our Lord and her parents
Nicasio F. Marin** and **Feliciana M. Marin
on February 28, 2007 in Manila, Philippines.

Her loving husband **Ernesto S. Ganiban**, only daughter **Lucille**, sister and brothers **Biding Marin Chan**, **Pepe Marin** (†), **Turing Marin**, and **Butch Marin**, request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her mortal remains lie in state at the Sta. Rita Parish Church, Philamlife Homes, West Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 3, 2007 at the Sta. Rita Memorial Crypt after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Message of Thanks

The bereaved daughter,
Ernestita "Em-Em" Magboo
together with the family
of the late

LETICIA "BAYBEE D." REYES DIONISIO

who peacefully joined our Creator
on 12 February 2007

wish to convey their heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and spiritual bouquets, visited and kept vigil during the wake, attended the funeral rites and in countless ways, condoled with them in their moment of grief.

Our Dearly Beloved
Mama

BLANQUITA LIMJOCO OCAMPO

Now rests in the infinite love and warmth of the Lord.
She was peacefully called to his embrace on the
27th of February 2007 at the age of 68.

Her loving husband **FLORENCIO**; children **FROILAN BENEDICT & MARIA GAIL, FREDRICK BERNARD & ELSA**; grandchildren **ENZO, ROBYN, KIRSTEN, CAMILLE, ERIN, ELIJAH** and **J**, and all her relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel Gladiolus of the Sanctuarium,. No. 739 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, the 3rd of March 2007 at the Cathedral Shrine and Parish of the Good Shepherd, Regalado Avenue, Fairview Park Subd., Quezon City.

Sale of Meralco shares eyed

Money supply expanded by 22.8% in Jan.

By Doris C. Dumlao

STRONG INFLOWS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE further boosted the annual growth of the broad money supply (m3) to 22.8 percent in January, up from 21.4 percent expansion in December.

The BSP yesterday reported that the country's total domestic liquidity swelled to P2.83 trillion at end-January versus year-ago's P2.3 trillion.

Domestic liquidity or m3 is the broadest measure of money and is used to estimate the entire supply of money within an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

On a month-to-month basis, however, the seasonally adjusted m3 growth slowed down to 1.7 percent compared to 2 percent in the previous month.

"The steady foreign exchange inflows sustained the expansion in domestic liquidity. At the same time, domestic credit has started to pick up, with credit to the public sector accelerating to 20.3 percent from the previous month's 6.7 percent," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Private sector growth, likewise, accelerated, although at a slightly slower pace of 6.2 percent compared to 6.4 percent in December.

"While the growth in domestic liquidity has not affected the downtrend in consumer prices, the BSP will continue to be attentive to the developments in monetary conditions in order to have ample room for any needed policy response that will ensure that the benign inflation environment is maintained," Tetangco said.

In a commentary dated Feb. 27, UBS Securities Asia Ltd. economist Philip Wyatt said that despite the strong growth in liquidity, the BSP would likely keep its monetary settings on status quo throughout this year.

GFIs urged to dispose of holdings jointly to ensure better price

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS asked the Social Security System, Government Service Insurance System and Land Bank of the Philippines to sell jointly their stakes in Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said a joint sale would enable these agencies command a better price for their stakes.

Teves said he met yesterday with officials of the three government financial institutions to discuss the proposal.

The government owns 29 percent of Meralco, 7 percent of which is held by the national government through the Privatization and Management Office (PMO) while 22 percent is held by the GFIs. The Lopezes own 14 percent of the utility firm; Union Finosa of Spain, 9 percent, and the balance is held by the public.

The government hopes to sell the government's stake in Meralco within the year to boost its revenues and meet its target of limiting the budget deficit to only P63 billion this year, Teves said.

The Department of Finance, head agency of the PMO and which monitors the GSIS and the SSS, has adopted a strategy of privatizing state-owned assets that are deemed better run by the private sector to shore up revenue collection.

For this year, the government is targeting to raise P27 billion from the privatization of state-owned assets.

Teves said the target did not yet take into account the proceeds from the planned sale of government shares in Meralco.

Yesterday, the government sold its 46-percent stake worth P25.2 billion in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), equivalent to an indirect stake of 6.4 percent in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT). The shares were bought by Metro Pacific Asset Holdings, which now holds full control of PTIC following the purchase of the government's shares.

The sale of PTIC shares enabled the government move closer to its P27-billion privatization revenue target for 2007.

Teves said the government was also expected to sell this year the old Iloilo airport, valued at P2 billion.

The government is also working on the sale of its stake in San Miguel Corp. and other assets, including the al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank.

Shops warned against 'no-return, no-exchange policy'

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE and Industry-National Capital Region yesterday warned retailers against their "no-return, no-exchange" policy following an inspection of various stores in Metro Manila to address a rash of complaints from consumers.

Trade assistant secretary Angel L. Pelayo said initial monitoring covered 23 establishments and showed that many stores were complying with the rules prohibiting the no-return, no-exchange policy.

Pelayo said NCR enforcers checked the official receipts issued by the establishments to see if there were indications that they were implementing this policy.

The implementing rules of the Consumer Act of the Philippines provide that "such words or words to that effect should not be written in the contract of sale, receipt or sales of transaction, or anywhere in the stores."

"The establishments monitored so far were complying with this provision," Pelayo said.

She said recurring complaints lodged by consumers against certain stores implementing a "no-return, no-exchange" policy prompted the DTI-NCR to conduct surprise monitoring operations. The monitoring team found that some of the stores inspected "exercised a reasonable degree of verification from customers who could not present proofs of purchase."

Most of the stores monitored issue receipts with statements like "Keep receipt for item return or exchange. Valid only within 7 days from date of purchase."

Department Administrative Order No. 2 of 1993 provides that only defective items could be returned or exchanged.

Violators are liable to criminal and administrative penalties, including fines of between P500 and P20,000 or imprisonment from 3 months to 2 years. Administrative fines range from P500 to P 300,000.

JP Morgan keeps positive outlook on RP mining

By Christine A. Gaylican

INVESTMENT HOUSE JP MORGAN Chase & Co. has given the Philippine mining industry a positive outlook in view of a "good investment climate set by the government."

"Our outlook for the Philippine mining industry is very strong," said Ivor Orchard, head of human resources of JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Ltd.

The Philippines now has the right policy environment that encourages even the biggest in the international mining sector, Orchard said in a joint press briefing with Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes.

Orchard said his team came to the Philippines for the possible financing of two world-class mining projects.

He said that the entry into the Philippines of the world's largest mining companies, including BHP Billiton, Anglo-American Plc. and X-Strata Plc,, would promote long-term investments in the industry.

"Their presence here would mean the possibility of having mineral production facilities adding value to the current production chain here. There would be opportunities for smelting and refining," added Andrew Little, technical director of JP Morgan Australia.

The team yesterday met with Reyes to seek assurance on environmental standards, which formed part of the lenders' conditions for financing.

PLDT's Mission-Critical Commitment

BPA/P and CCAP get quality assurances for smooth BPO Operations

At the Rigodon ballroom of Manila Peninsula, there were more than a few concerned faces from members of the Business Processing Association Philippines (BPA/P) and the Contact Center Association of the Philippines (CCAP). These were the power players in the fastest growing industry in the country and yet they've faced real vulnerability ever since the Taiwan earthquake cable break nearly disconnected the Asian region.

In a "Restoration Update" given by PLDT, they found good news upon hearing that most PLDT services were up significantly since the break, and performance so far is ahead of the curve. Most remarkable was a 95% service level restoration for Data services (through Bi-lateral IPLC), up from 55% right after the quake. All managed Data services are still at 100%. Internet and Voice continued with steady progress, up to 68% and 80% respectively.

Although service providers are actually protected from liabilities caused by force majeure, it has always been PLDT's commitment to ensure that facilities are immediately restored at all costs, even in these types of situations. Given that BPO companies trust PLDT to meet their connectivity requirements, the telco leader continues to honor its business partnerships by providing them with full support.

"As always, we went the extra hundred yards for our customers," says Luigi Lopa, Business Head for PLDT Corporate Business Group (CBG). "PLDT even bought restoration facilities and extra capacity from cable service providers to ensure full-time connectivity links for BPOs. We procured these capacities at very significant premiums over market prices."

PLDT understands that the level and quality of response given this crisis situation proves the readiness of not just PLDT, but the whole country, to support this very important and fast-growing industry. Both BPA/P and CCAP are the vanguard associations for the local BPO industry. Together they direct the development policies of the vast majority of local and multinational outsourcing companies. CCAP oversees more than 90% of local seats and BPA/P is an outreach private sector-led organization which effectively sells the Philippines as a destination of choice to foreign outsourcing companies.

As early as 2004, BPA/P had forecasted that the total industry workforce would reach 1,082,800 members by 2010 and that revenues would be more than $12 Billion. This would cover 6 existing sectors of the industry namely Contact Centers, Business Processing including back office operations, Medical and Legal Transcription, Software Development and Maintenance, Animation, and Engineering Design.

So far the only large bump on the express highway of BPOs (approximately a startling 100% growth a year for a certain period) has been the Taiwan quake and cable cuts.

"In a world faced with force-majeure and large-scale calamities, recent events have taught us that BPO operators face risks," said Eric Alberto, PLDT Senior Vice President and Head of Corporate Business Group. "For mission-critical and high-end outsourcing work, PLDT has premium managed solutions to ensure that you are always online."

Alberto also pointed out that over the past two years BPA/P and CCAP members have become a significant part of the PLDT portfolio and that his company is "aligning with their efforts in strategic sustainability." It will go a long way that the light doesn't fade in the sunshine industry.

Anand Chopra, Citigroup Business Process Solutions PTE Ltd. President & CEO and Eric Alberto, PLDT SVP & Corporate Business Group Head.

L-R: Eric Alberto, PLDT SVP & Corporate Business Group Head, Raymond Del Val of Data Craft, and Vic Endaya, Advanced Contact Solutions President and CEO.

L-R: Celeste Ilagan, BOI Executive Director, Cesar Enriquez, PLDT FVP & CBOO, Atty. Gil Zerrudo, Sr. Partner Quisumbing Torres Law Firm, and Precy Katigbak, PLDT Corporate Business Sales Head.

L-R: Ryan Manalastas, PLDT Senior Relationship Manager, Masanori Haneishi, NTT Senior Advisor, and Anand Chopra, Citigroup Business Process Solutions PTE Ltd. President & CEO.

PLDT
BUSINESS

Rodel Narboneta, PLDT Global Data Business Management Category Head.

TRG General Manager, Shuja Keen, and PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head, Kat Luna-Abelarde.

PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head, Jehan Dayrit, and Influent Philippines Inc. VP-Operations, Steve Taylor.

Eric Alberto, PLDT SVP & Corporate Business Group Head, and Jojo Uligan, Contact Center Association of the Philippines Executive Director.

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UNCLE John's Braised Beef rice topping

Something for everyone

Uncle John's seeks to meet everyone's food preferences

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

IS CHOOSING WHERE TO EAT always difficult when you are out with the whole family, especially in a mall?

Somebody wants chicken nuggets and crispy fries; another likes braised beef with yang chow fried rice; someone else prefers light, tomato-based pasta; while still another wants a huge, meat-laden, cheesy pizza.

The solution, of course, is to go to a place where you can have all those like Uncle John's.

The newest QSR (quick-service restaurant) at the third level of Robinsons Galleria is one place where the family or *barkada* can dine together and indulge their individual food cravings.

Uncle John's is not your ordinary fast-food restaurant. It serves a wide selection of popular American, Italian and Chinese dishes. Thus, everyone has a fun and affordable culinary adventure.

"Normally, when you go out as a family, there's always a discussion about where to eat," says Bobby Go, Uncle John's business unit head. "Choosing a dining destination where everybody is happy and satisfied can really be tough.

"Sometimes you have no choice but to please the youngest member of the family who wants to eat burger while your older kids want to eat pizza and stuff. In some cases, you just split up and see each other after eating. Uncle John's is about meeting the specific food cravings of people under one roof."

Good feedback

Only a month after it opened, Uncle John's has already gained a steady clientele. "The public's response has been most enthusiastic, going [by the number of] customers who patronize us," says Go.

The restaurant's name was actually the result of a survey conducted by the company. Go says so many names were submitted, and several had "uncle" in them. Uncle John's was eventually chosen.

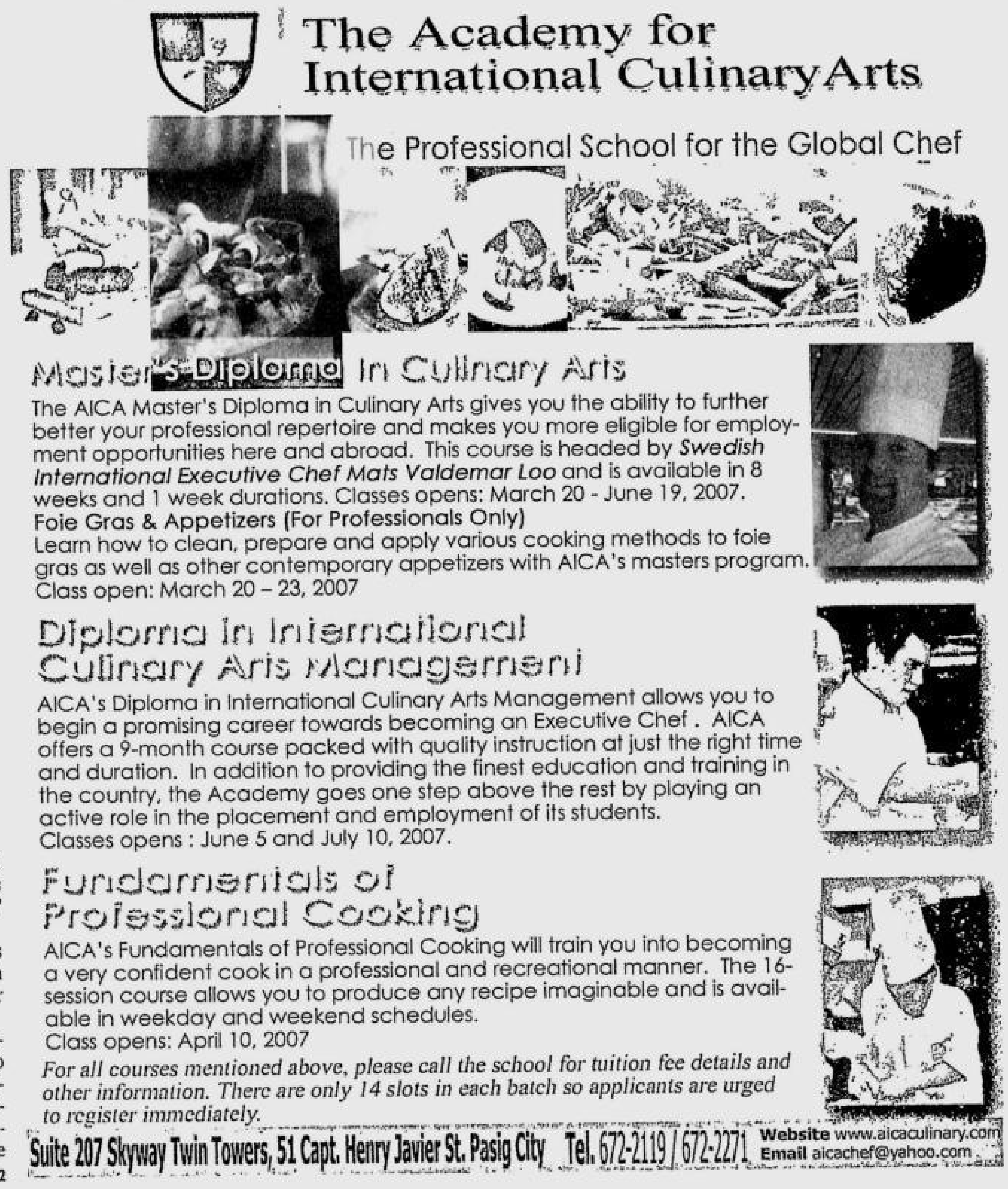
"Uncle John's connotes something fun and friendly, not threatening. John is like Juan. It's very familiar to people. It's easy to remember," he says.

Though at the moment Uncle John's offers primarily Chinese food, in addition to Italian and American, Go explains this is just for starters..

In fact, he prefers to call the food Asian "because we eventually plan to branch out into other Asian cuisine given the penchant of Filipinos to try all kinds of food like Japanese, Korean, Thai. We wouldn't want to limit ourselves to just Chinese. Our menu has more

SOMETHING/ C2

BOBBY Go, Uncle John's business unit head



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BIG Burger Steak

COUNTER at Uncle John's is spanking new and serves a wide selection of popular American, Italian and Chinese dishes.

Something for everyone

From page C1

flexibility. We're starting now with Chinese."

Go admits, though, that since Uncle John's opened, Italian dishes have proved more popular. "The value meal of pizza with the pasta is one of our top sellers, not to mention our American buffalo wings."

Uncle John's features bright interiors with white tables and red and mustard chairs. Murals show familiar tourist landmarks like the Statue of Liberty and Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The dining ambience is casual, modern and fun. Prices are affordable though the restaurant strives to maintain the highest standards of food taste and quality.

Three counters allow for quick and easy service. At Uncle John's, the food is served to you about 10 minutes after you place your order. The kitchen has different stations for each cuisine so "your dim sum will not end up on your pizza," says Go.

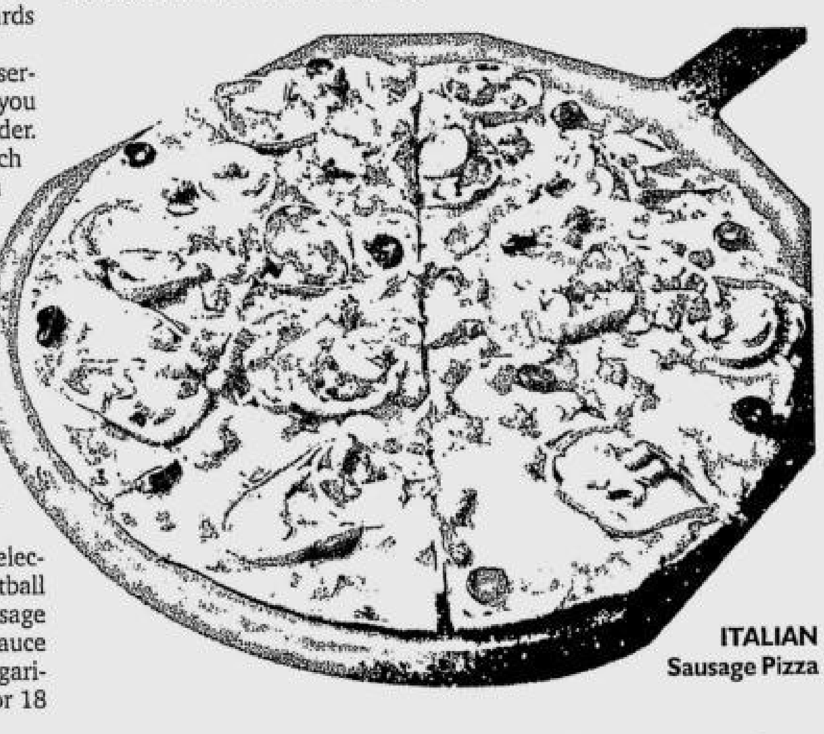
"Our research showed Chinese, American and Italian dishes are the most popular in the local market," he adds.

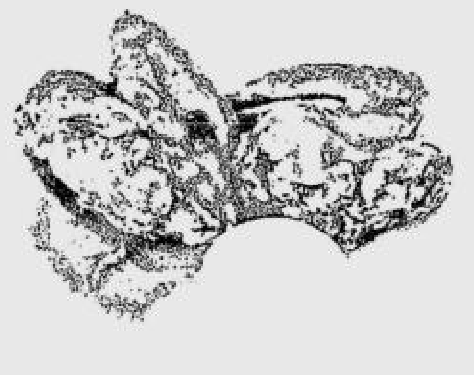
East meets West

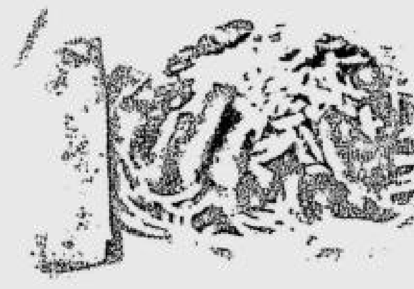
People who go for American food, including big servings, can have assorted burgers (regular, double, big, big burger steak), Fried Chicken and Buffalo Wings, as well as Potato Fries and Chicken Macaroni Salad.

Italian food lovers can choose from a selection of red sauce (regular spaghetti, meatball spaghetti with focaccia, Italian sausage spaghetti or pasta puttanesca) and white sauce (Ham and Mushroom Spaghetti and Hungarian Sausage Spaghetti) pastas. Pizza, 14 or 18 inches in size, is available in six flavors: Cheese and Garlic, Ham and Cheese, Hawaiian, Pepperoni, Italian Sausage and Four Cheese.

FISH and Bean Curd rice topping


ITALIAN Sausage Pizza


BUFFALO Wings


ITALIAN Sausage Spaghetti with Focaccia

Chinese dishes include a selection of dim sum like Pork Siomai, Shark's Fin, Fried Dumplings, Shanghai Rolls, Chicken Feet and Siopao; congee (Chicken, Meatball, Fish Fillet or Beef); noodle soup (Chicken, Beef, Wanton or Beef Wanton); and other noodles and vegetables (Miki Bihon, Crispy Noodles and Stir-fried Mixed Vegetables).

Rice choices include Yang Chow or Salted Fish Fried Rice. There are also filling Rice Toppings (Shanghai Rolls, Sweet and Sour Pork, Fish and Bean Curd, and Braised Beef).

Uncle John's serves a variety of sodas, as well as C2 Green Tea, Apple and Lemon; and Nature's Harvest Mango and Oranges.

A complete meal, which includes a main course, side dish or dessert, and drink, costs about P100-P150.

Next time you and your family are at Robinsons Galleria, avert a brewing "food fight" by heading to Uncle John's. It is open daily, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

The Maya Kitchen
CULINARY ARTS CENTER

PASTA CLASS BACK TO BACK WITH VEGAN COOKING AND RELAXING TAI CHI EXERCISE

JOIN Maya Kitchen for fun-filled classes that may change the way you think about Italian food. Learn the casual fare of light and new restaurant specialties with Tai Chi. Enroll now...

Modern Italian Pasta: March 3 (Sat.) 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Chicken Ragout w/ handmade Stracchi Pasta, Confit Pork Belly, Saffron Pasta w/ Angel Hair Pasta, Vegetarian Pasta, Pancetta & Mushroom w/ workshop on preparing handmade fresh pasta. P1,000.

Vegan Cooking and Tai Chi Class: March 3 (Sat) 3-6 p.m. Coverage: Demo of Vegetarian Hot Pot, Pochero, Paella & Vegetarian Salmon Steaks w/ Tai Chi Lesson. A 3-step Tai Chi Exercise by Taichi & Chi Kung teacher Ed Sevilla. Limited slot only, Pre-registration required. P1,000.

Biryani and Kababs: March 10 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Authentic Techniques of Preparing different kinds of Biryani and Kababs (Chicken, Fish, Vegetables & Minced Meat) by a Pakistani Teacher. P900.

Steaks and Roast Galore: March 17 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Beef Tournados with Mustard Sauce, Pan Roasted Rosemary Chicken with Basil Mashed Potatoes Pan Ajus, Roasted Pork with Applesauce, Crispy Salmon w/ Siciliana Sauce, Osso Buco Steak with lecture and preparation of basic steak, sauces, marinades and techniques of grilling. P1,000.

Chinese Cooking: March 24 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Pata Tim, Chinese Lumpia, Siomai, Kikiam, Pork Spareribs w/ black beans, Chinese stuffed chicken, Almond Jelly. P900.

Coffee Basic 101 (Barista Course): March 24 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Coverage: Coffee History, Coffee process, Trouble shooting, Coffee blend, Machine know-how-proper grinding. Techniques to a perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso doppio, Cappuccino, Latte, Macchiatto; Cold Coffee Concoction: Includes Coffee tasting & snacks. P1,500.

CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON (Limited enrollment, pre-registration required)

Cake Decorating: March 3 and 10 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fundamentals of cake decorating; coloring, icing (Boiled, Caramel, Chocolate, Sugar, Simple Fondant Icing); Basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flowers including bunching techniques. Individual workshop on icing application & cake designing. Free cake decorating starter tips. P3,500.

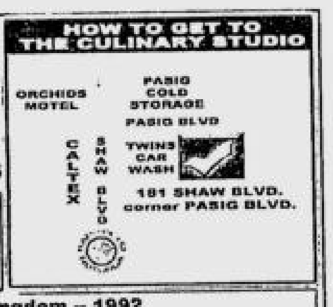
Fundamentals of Bakery Production: March 6-9/20-23 (T-F) 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Basic & commercial baking techniques applicable to the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies & cakes w/ Free Baking Cookbook. Includes workshop exercise for Commercial Scale Productions. P5,000.

Catering Seminar: March 7-9 (W-F) 2 - 6 p.m. Legal and technical aspect to get started in Catering Business, Facilities, personnel, menu including portioning and quantification. Actual Cooking of Roast Stuffed Chicken Thighs with garlic gravy, vegetable Samosa, Honey Garlic Ribs & Wings, Baked Spring Rolls, Quiche Lorraine & Special Dessert with Free Catering cookbook. P3,000.

Basic Culinary: March 13-16 / 27-30 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation & safety; nutrition & nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs & spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing & boning poultry, filleting fish & meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry & meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. P6,000.

Food Processing: (Meat, Fruit & Vegetable Preservation) March 21-23 (W-F) 2- 6 p.m. Pastrami, Corned Beef, Asstd. native sausage & cold cuts, Kimchi, Mixed vegetable Atchara, mango chutney, sundried tomatoes, Asstd. Candied fruits (orange, pineapple, lemon). P2,500.

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at *mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph*



CAKE DECORATING; SAUSAGE MAKING; COOKING & BAKING LESSONS

AT 181 SHAW BLVD., PASIG ☎ TEL. NOS 671-4498 • 671-4472 • 671-4489
DEMONSTRATION-STUDENT PARTICIPATION METHOD. ALL COURSES ARE FOR BEGINNERS & NON-BEGINNERS.
HANDS-ON IN ALL COURSES. FEES INCLUSIVE OF INGREDIENTS • PRACTICAL, EASY EXACT MONEY MAKING RECIPES

Sylvia Reynoso-Gala
Gold Medalist, Academia de Gastronomos, Madrid, Spain – 1964
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied in 6 Cooking Schools in Hongkong

Morella Reynoso Gala
Valedictorian, I.H.M.E.S. International Hotel School, United Kingdom – 1992
Studied Cooking at Le Cordon Bleu, London
✓ ALSO TEACHES AT # 25 GLADIOLA ST. UPPER Q.M., BAGUIO CITY TEL. # (074) 444-8844

Ernest Reynoso Gala
Graduate : Italian Institute for Advanced Culinary & Pastry Arts under Chef Director John Nocita, Soverato, Calebria, Italy
Graduate : Le Moulin de Mougins Alain Llorca, Cannes, France
Graduate : Ecole Ritz Escoffier, Paris Ritz Hotel, France
Graduate : Ecole Lenotre Pattisserie, Plaisir Cedex, France
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied at Chopstick and Hongkong Town Gas Culinary Schools

MAR 1 THU 1:30 - 5:30PM - ALL NEW ROASTS & PASTAS COURSE 2. BY ERNEST. P1,800. CHATEAUBRIAND W/ BERNAISE SAUCE; MONTEREY ROAST RACK OF LAMB W/ CREAMY CUCUMBER SAUCE; TENDER ROAST BABY BACK PORK RIBS W/ SPECIAL BBQ SAUCE; BAKED LASAGNA W/ RICOTTA & MAGNOLIA MOZZARELLA CHEESES; SPECIAL MAGNOLIA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ 4 CHEESES. PLUS MANY BONUS RECIPES OF DIFF. SAUCES & GRAVIES FOR MEAT & PASTAS!

MAR 2 FRI 1:30 - 5:15PM - LIGHT & AIRY ENSAYMADAS. CHEESE ROLLS, SPECIAL EGG PANDESAL; PANDESAL W/ FILLING; CINNAMON ROLLS. BREAD-BAKING MADE EASY! **P1,680. BY SYLVIA**

MAR 3 SAT 1:30 - 5:30PM POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES 2. LEARN 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES! SHABU-SHABU W/ 2 SAUCES; ASSORTED CRISPY TEMPURA; GRILLED PORK & BEEF SLICE; UDON (VERY SPECIAL NOODLES); FRIED TOFUS IN SPECIAL SAUCE; BREADED CHICKEN WINGS W/ VINEGAR SAUCE; JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF COMPLETE SUSHI BAR. **P1,680.**

MAR 6 TUE 1:30 - 5:30PM - 6 INDIVIDUAL SIZED EUROPEAN CAKES & DESSERTS 2. BY ERNEST. P1,800. MINI BUNDT CAKES DRENCHED IN ORANGE SYRUP' BUTTERSCOTCH CAKES W/ CARAMELIZED TOPPING; LITTLE CHOCO CAKES W/ HOT FUDGE; UNBELIEVABLY GOOD BANANA LOAF CAKE, SMALL CARROT CAKES W/ RICOTTA CHEESE TOPPING; ITALIAN PUDDING IN CUSTARD CUPS. (ALL LEARNED IN EUROPE)

MAR 7 WED 1:30 - 5:30PM - ELEGANT PARTY DISHES 2. CRISPY BREADED SHRIMPS W/ HOISIN SAUCE; ROAST MONTEREY LEG OF PORK W/ GLAZED CARROTS & MARBLED POTATOES; BAKED MONTEREY HAMBURGER CORN-TOPPED CASSEROLE; CRAB BISQUE; FLAMING BAKED ALASKA (ICE CREAM CAKE). **INCLUDES ACTUAL TABLE SETTING & SERVICE (FORMAL & INFORMAL) FOR HOMES & RESTAURANTS. P1,680. BY SYLVIA**

MAR 8 THU 1:30 - 5:30PM - 5 NEW CLASSIC ITALIAN PASTAS COURSE BY ERNEST. P1,800. BAKED LASAGNA #1 LAYERED W/ MONTEREY MEATS, RED & WHITE SAUCE; CANNELLONI (BIG ROLLS OF MEAT & VEGGIE FILLED PASTA, BAKED IN CHEESE SAUCE); BONELESS MAGNOLIA CHICKEN LASAGNA BAKED IN LAYERS OF CREAM SAUCE; CENTURY TUNA EGGPLANT LASAGNA (LAYERS OF EGGPLANT & PASTA W/ TUNA, MAGNOLIA PARMESAN & MOZZARELLA CHEESES W/ HUNT'S SPAGHETTI SAUCE); RIGATONI (BIG MACARONI) W/ SHRIMPS, ITALIAN SAUSAGE IN CREAMY SAUCE.

MAR 10 SAT 1:30 - 5:15PM - LEARN THE SOFTEST SIOPAO DOUGH EVER! - THE MOST DELICIOUS SIOMAI; KUA PAO (PEKING SIOPAO W/ MEAT & PICKLED MUSTASA); FISH HEAD SOUP;CAMARON RELLENADO; QUIKIAM W/ RADISH SALAD; STEAMED LAPU-LAPU. **P1,680. BY SYLVIA**

MAR 13 TUE 1:30 - 5:00PM - 9 SPECIAL BARBECUE - BEEF TERIYAKI IN SKEWERS; PORK SPARERIBS W/ HOISIN SAUCE; MAGNOLIA CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS IN HONEY SAUCE; (SATE A JAM) CHICKEN SKEWERS IN PEANUT SAUCE; BEEF RIBS W/ PEKING NOODLES; DELICIOUS SPARERIBS; NEW KOREAN BEEF BARBECUE; NASIGORENG (INDONESIAN FRIED RICE); FERNANDO MIGUEL ERENETA'S CHICKEN HONEY; THE BEST PORK BARBECUE W/ PEANUT SAUCE. **P1,800. BY ERNEST**

MAR 15 THU 1:30 - 5:30PM - NEW SOUPS & SEAFOODS COURSE. BY ERNEST. P1,800. SHRIMP CHOWDER; FRENCH ONION SOUP; NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER; PRAWNS THERMIDOR; CHARCOAL GRILLED TUNA BELLY W/ TERIYAKI SAUCE; POACHED WHOLE TUNA W/ HERB MAYO. PLUS 10 BONUS RECIPES OF SUPER GOOD SAUCES FOR FISH & SEAFOOD!

MAR 17 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN. JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN W/ GRAVY. CHICKEN BURGER, DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD; SIZZLING GRILLED PORK CHOPS; FOUR SEASONS PUNCH; RIPE MANGO JUICE; MELON TAPIOCA W/ SAGO; GREEN MANGO JUICE. **P1,680. BY SYLVIA**

MAR 19 MON 1:30 - 5:00PM - BUSINESS BAKESHOP BESTSELLERS! BIG, UNIFORN SIZED FROZEN UP TO 6 MONTHS SILVANAS (MINI SANS RIVAL); BRAZO DE MERCEDES; CLASSIC CHOCOLATE MOUSSE CAKE; MACAPUNO PANDAN CAKE W/ MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER ICING. **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 20 TUE 1:30 - 5:00PM - UBE CHIFFON CAKE; ROCKY ROAD; MOIST CHOCOLATE CAKE; FOOD FOR THE GODS ' WALNUT BROWNIES PLUS TIPS ON CONVERTING CAKES INTO JELLY ROLLS & MUFFINS. DELICIOUS CAKES SOLD IN TOP BAKESHOPS! ALL CAKES W/ DIFFERENT ICINGS **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 21 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM - OPEN A PIZZA PARLOR! - LEARN TO MAKE THESE ITALIAN FAVORITES: MOZZARELLA TOPPED BIG & THICK CRUST PIZZA (BAKED IN A RECTANGULAR PAN); THIN CRUST PIZA W/ DIFFERENT TOPPINGS; FETTUCINE ALFREDO; SPAGHETTI; CARBONARA; BREADED VEAL STEAKS W/ LEMON; PEACH-FILLED CREPESW/ FRUIT SAUCE. PLUS 12 BONUS RECIPES OF PASTAS & SANDWICHES. **P1,800. BY ERNEST**

MAR 22 THU 1:30 - 5:00PM - SOFTEST DOUGHNUTS FOR BUSINESS! - NO OVEN NOR SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED. INCLUDES CHOCOLATE & MARBLED DOUGHNUTS W/ SEVERAL FILLINGS; ICINGS, DIPS. PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF THICK SPANISH CHOCOLATE & CHURROS. **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 23 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - REYNOSO-GALA & ARAULLO KAKANIN! MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH SPECIAL RICE BIBINGKA; SAPIN-SAPIN ESPECIAL; DELICIOUS, EASY-TO-MAKE RICE SUMAN; HOMEMADE HOPIA W/ MONGO OR UBE FILLING. PLUS BONUS RECIPE: APONG METYANG'S CASSAVA CAKE. **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 24 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - BEST SELLER OVEN BAKED CHICKEN PIES IN MUFFIN CUPS; FLAKY EMPANADA; MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH MAMON; MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER SLICES, PUTO PAO. BONUS RECIPES OF MACAROONS; PUTO FLOUR UBE & TRI-COLORED PUTO **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 25 SUN 1:30 - 5:00PM - MONEY-MAKING HOTEL & BAKESHOP BESTSELLERS! CHOCO LAVA CAKES (CHOCO CENTERS WILL OOZE OUT); "TARTUFO" (ITALIAN DOME CHOCOLATE COVERED ICE CREAM CAKE W/ CHOCO CAKE BASE CAN BE FROZEN FOR A MONTH OR LONGER)); CREAM PUFFS W/ BAVARIAN & CHOCO FILLING W/ 2 GLAZES; THE YUMMIEST NEW YORK RESTAURANT SCHOOL CHEF INSTRUCTRESS LORRIE REYNOSO'S BAKED CHEESECAKE. **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 26 MON 1:30 - 5:00PM - ANG SARAP PANG-NEGOSYO! 2 VERSIONS OF THE CHEWIESTCHOCO CRINKLES IN MANILA; GIANT MANGO MERINGUE WALNUT TORTE; CLASSIC AMERICAN APPLE PIE; FRENCH STREUSEL APPLE PIE. **P1,800. BY MORELLA**

MAR 27 TUE 1:30 - 4:30PM - MONEY-MAKING FASTFOOD RECIPES! YUMMY CHICKEN INASAL; S & R HERBED ROASTED MAGNOLIA CHICKEN; CAJUN BURGERS W/ SPECIAL SAUCE; SPICY MAGNOLIA CHICKEN BURGERS; BAKED POTATO CHIP MAGNOLIA CHICKEN BREASTS W/ PESTO LINGUINE. **P1,800. BY ERNEST**

MAR 28 WED 1:30 - 5:30PM - ALL NEW STEAKS & SALADS COURSE 2. BY ERNEST. P1,800. MONTEREY FILETS MIGNON W/ CAPER SAUCE; SIZZLING ITALIAN PORK PARMIGIANA TOPPED W/ MAGNOLIA MOZZARELLA CHEESE; HEART MEDITERRANEAN SALAD W/ ANCHOVIES, CAPERS, FETA CHESE; SPECIAL CRAB SALAD W/ CREAMY MAYO; FESTIVE TUNA; POTATO, APPLE, BET SALAD W/ HEAVY CREAM. PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF DIFFERENT SALAD DRESSINGS & TIPS ON COOKING TENDER, JUICY STEAKS!

MAR 31 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - 9 MONEY-MAKING FOR TEENS & ADULT BEGINNERS. CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES; CHOCOLATE CRINKLES; BUTTER SCOTCH BROWNIES; LENGUA DE GATO; CHEWY MALLOW BARS; RUSSIAN TEA COOKIES, VIRGIE PANTALEON'S DATE WALNUT COOKIES; SPECIAL POLVORON; LEBANESE DATE BOAT TARTS **P1,800. BY ERNEST**

APR 12, 19 & 26 - CHILDREN'S COOKING & BAKING COURSE - THREE THURSDAYS - 1:30 - 4:30PM - P4,800 - INCLUDING INGREDIENTS. FOR CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 14 YEARS OLD.
OVEN-BAKED CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS & POTATOES, SHRIMP ALA KING IN MUFFIN CUPS; PARTY FRUIT SALAD IN ICE CREAM CONES; CHEESE MACAROONS, RAISIN WALNUT COOKIES; MEATLOAF SUPREME; YUMMY SPARERIBS W/ COLESLAW SALAD; MAGNOLA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ MUSHROOMS. MAGNOLIA CREAM CHEESE CHEWY BARS; TINY FRUIT CAKE BARS; CHOCO-PEANUTS IN PIE CRUST.
THIS COURSE IS GIVEN ONLY ONCE A YEAR BY ERNEST & SYLVIA.
ONLY 24 STUDENTS WILL BE ACCOMODATED. PAID RESERVATION IS A MUST. THANK YOU

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.sylviareynosogala.com

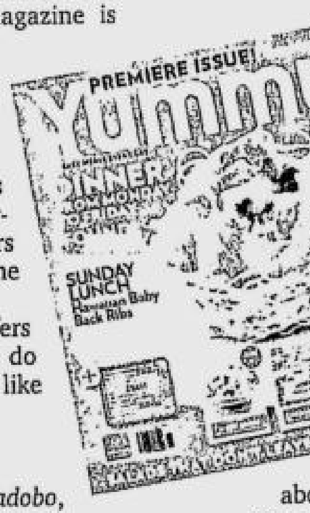
Something yummy is out in March

SUMMIT MEDIA IS LAUNCHING ITS latest title, Yummy Magazine, this month.

The modern food magazine is dedicated to the everyday pleasures of grocery-shopping, cooking and eating.

With over 50 recipes that use ingredients available in any supermarket, Yummy offers fresh food ideas for home cooking.

The magazine also offers suggestions on what to do with leftover food like *adobo*.



White Adobo

Take the leftover *adobo*, flake the meat and stir-fry in oil to make *adobo* flakes. Combine with *kesong puti* for a delicious sandwich filling.

Serves: 5

Preparation time: 5 minutes + 30 minutes for marinating

Cooking time: 40 minutes

1 kilo *kasim* or *liempo*, *adobo* cut
1 whole garlic, pounded
2 c white vinegar
1 c water
5 ½ tbsp white sugar
3 tsp salt
2 pc bay leaf
¼ c peppercorn

Step 1: Marinate meat in garlic and vinegar for 30 minutes.

Step 2: Put water, bay leaf, peppercorn, sugar, and salt in a pot and add in meat mixture.

Step 3: Let boil then lower heat and simmer meat until tender, about 30-40 minutes.

Yummy Magazine is packed with unique recipes, fun food features, and practical cooking tips for anyone who loves to cook and eat. Selling for P95, the maiden issue of Yummy Magazine will be available in all leading bookstores and magazine stands.

Enroll
Your Child Now!

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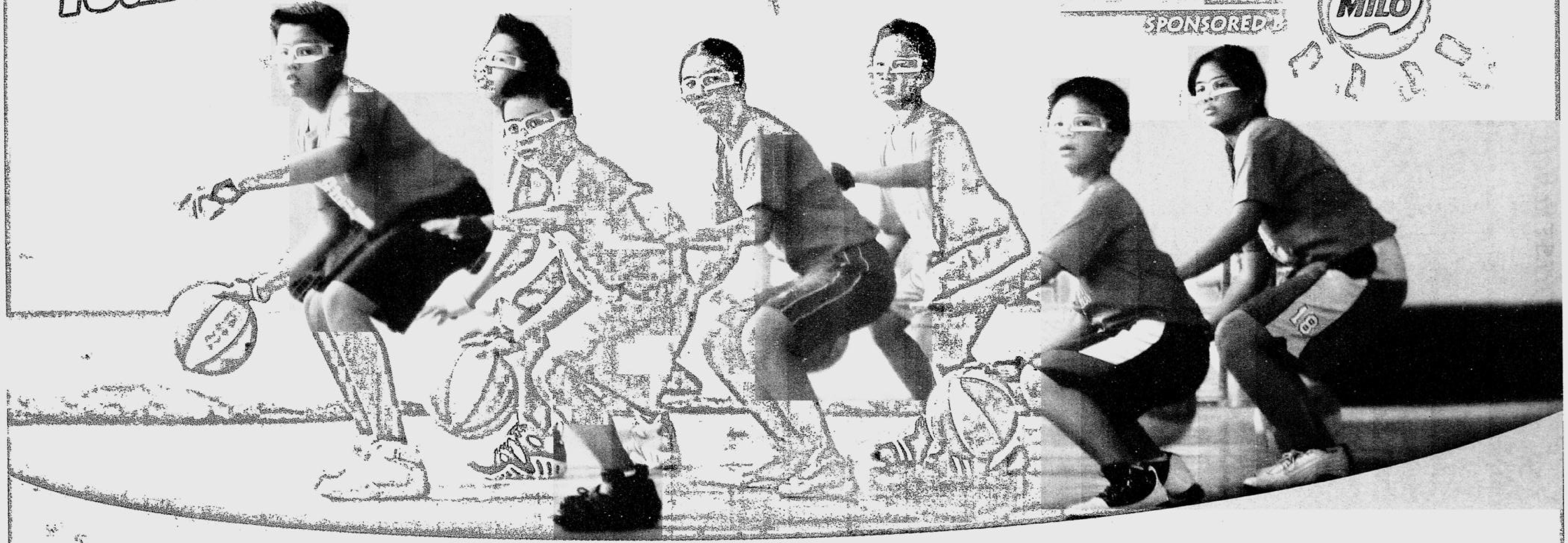

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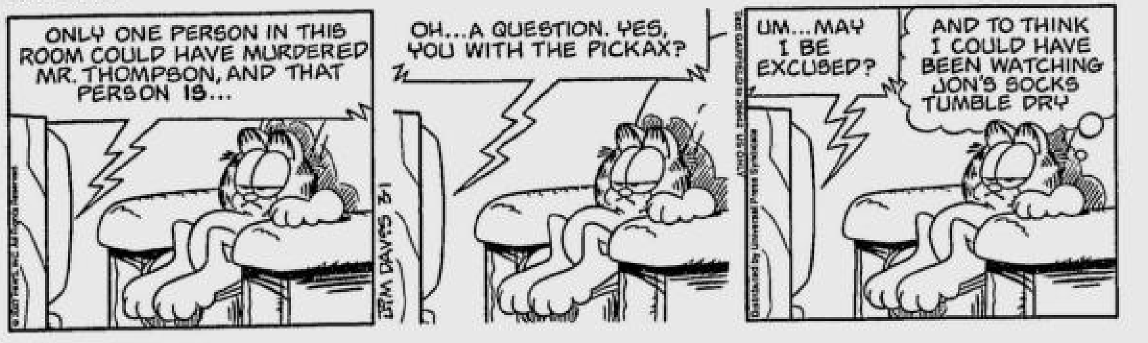
Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 1295 series of 2006

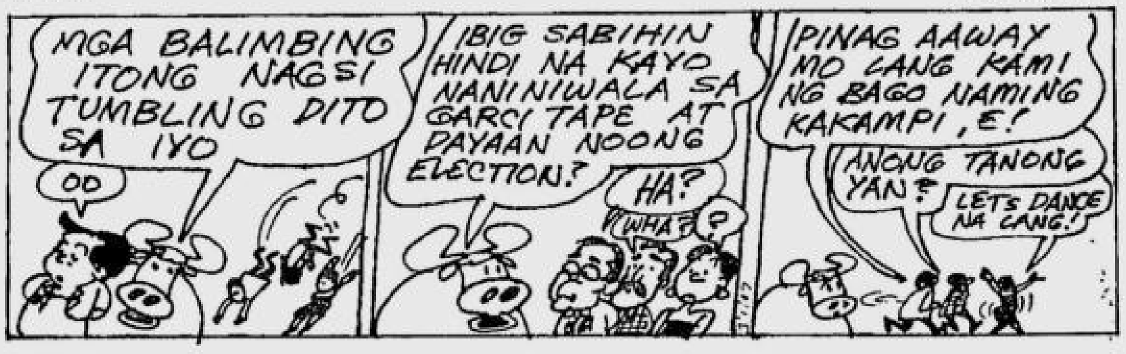
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


ONLY ONE PERSON IN THIS ROOM COULD HAVE MURDERED MR. THOMPSON, AND THAT PERSON IS...
OH...A QUESTION. YES, YOU WITH THE PICKAX?
UM...MAY I BE EXCUSED?
AND TO THINK I COULD HAVE BEEN WATCHING JON'S SOCKS TUMBLE DRY
JIM DAVIS 3-1

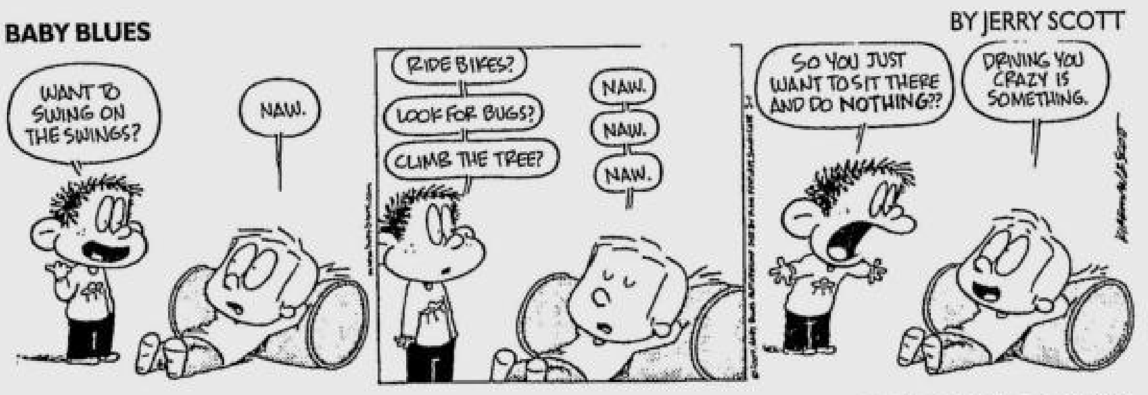
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MGA BALIMBING ITONG NAGSI TUMBLING DITO SA IYO
OO
IBIG SABIHIN HINDI NA KAYO NANINIWALA SA GARCI TAPE AT DAYAAN NOONG ELECTION?
HA?
WHA?
?
PINAG AAWAY MO LANG KAMI NG BAGO NAMING KAKAMPI, E!
ANONG TANONG YAN?
LET'S DANCE NA LANG!

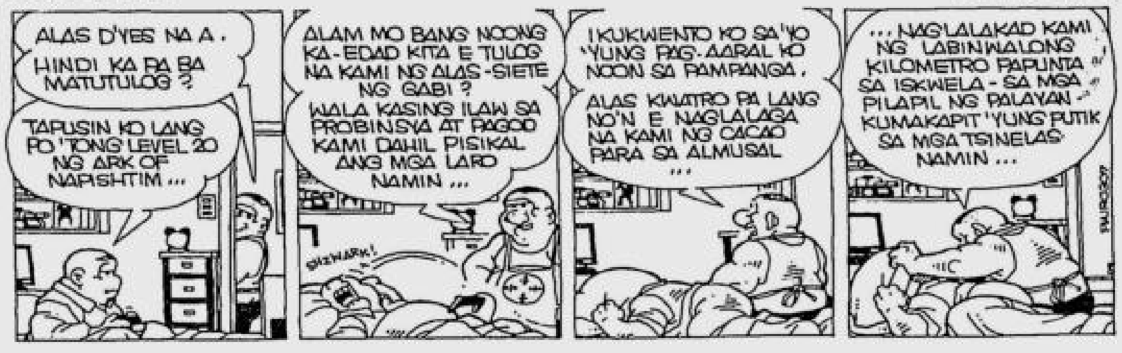
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WANT TO SWING ON THE SWINGS?
NAW.
RIDE BIKES?
LOOK FOR BUGS?
CLIMB THE TREE?
NAW.
NAW.
NAW.
SO YOU JUST WANT TO SIT THERE AND DO NOTHING??
DRIVING YOU CRAZY IS SOMETHING.

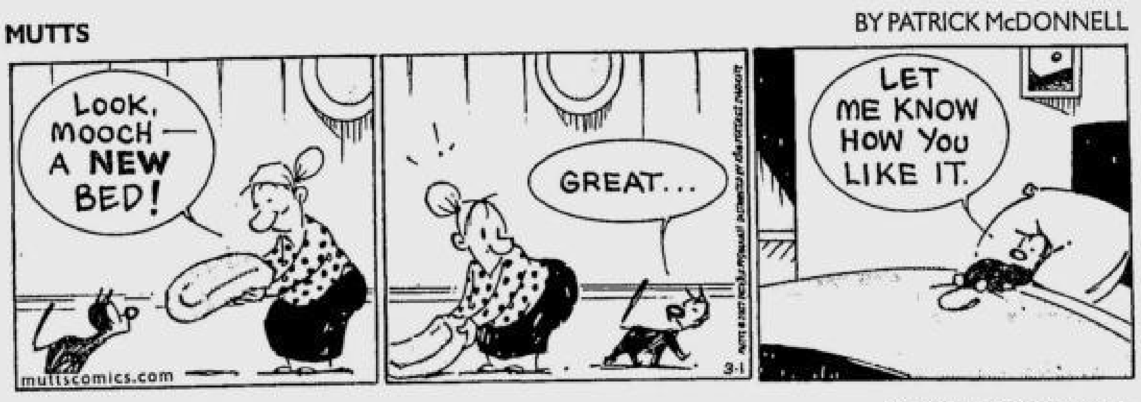
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAS D'YES NA A. HINDI KA PA BA MATUTULOG?
TAPUSIN KO LANG PO 'TONG LEVEL 20 NG ARK OF NAPISHTIM...
ALAM MO BANG NOONG KA-EDAD KITA E TULOG NA KAMI NG ALAS-SIETE NG GABI? WALA KASING ILAW SA PROBINSYA AT PAGOD KAMI DAHIL PISIKAL ANG MGA LARO NAMIN...
SHZWARK!
IKUKWENTO KO SA 'YO 'YUNG PAG-AARAL KO NOON SA PAMPANGA. ALAS KWATRO PA LANG NO'N E NAGLALAGA NA KAMI NG CACAO PARA SA ALMUSAL...
...NAGLALAKAD KAMI NG LABINWALONG KILOMETRO PAPUNTA SA ISKWELA - SA MGA PILAPIL NG PALAYAN - KUMAKAPIT 'YUNG PUTIK SA MGA TSINELAS NAMIN...

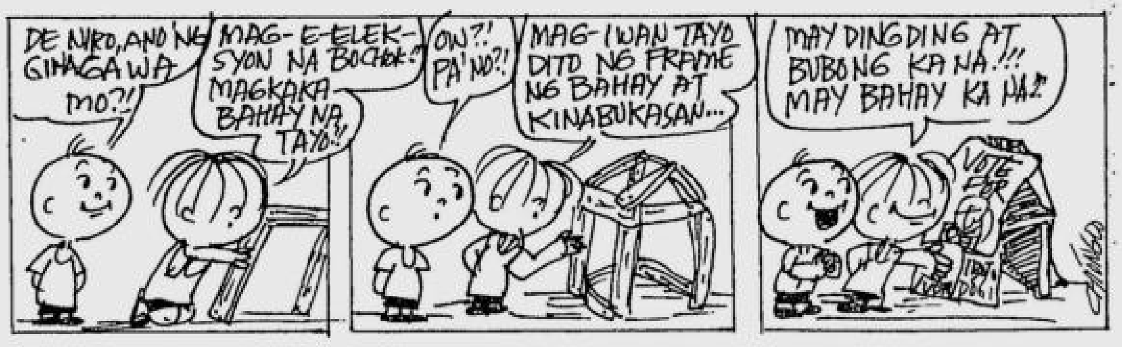
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LOOK, MOOCH — A NEW BED!
!
GREAT...
LET ME KNOW HOW YOU LIKE IT.
muttscomics.com
3-1

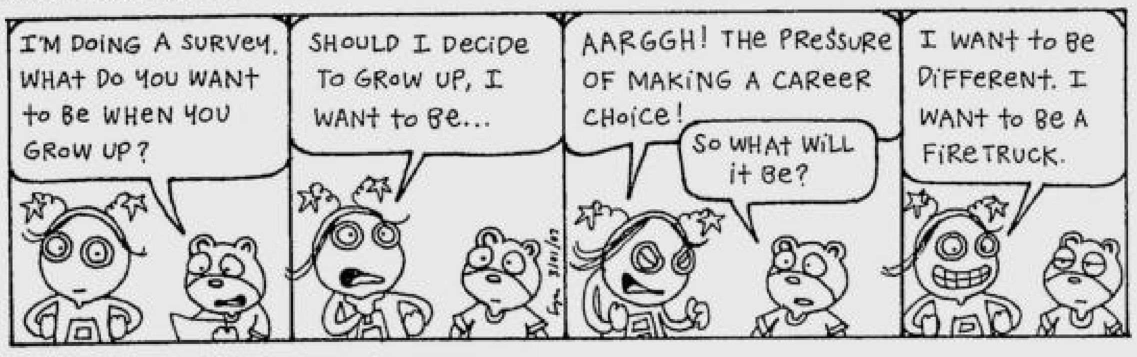
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO, ANO NG GINAGAWA MO?!
MAG-E-ELEKSYON NA BOCHOK! MAGKAKA-BAHAY NA TAYO!!
OW?! PA'NO?!
MAG-IWAN TAYO DITO NG FRAME NG BAHAY AT KINABUKASAN...
MAY DINGDING AT BUBONG KA NA!!! MAY BAHAY KA NA!
VOTE FOR
CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

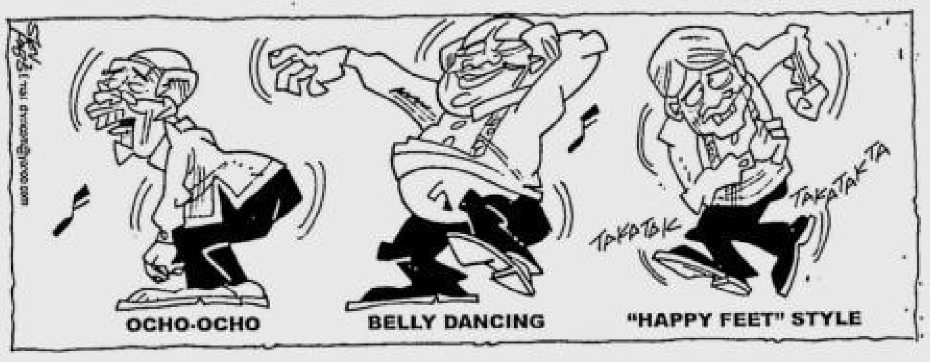
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M DOING A SURVEY. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?
SHOULD I DECIDE TO GROW UP, I WANT TO BE...
AARGGH! THE PRESSURE OF MAKING A CAREER CHOICE!
SO WHAT WILL IT BE?
I WANT TO BE DIFFERENT. I WANT TO BE A FIRETRUCK.

DIVINE COMEDY

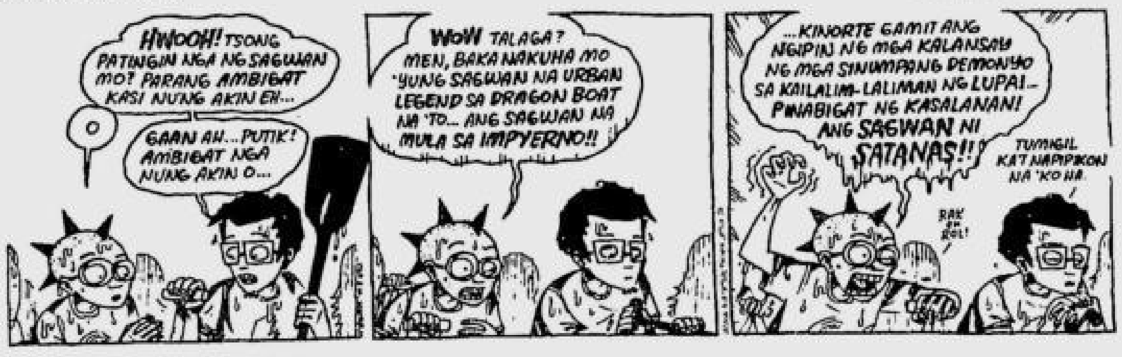
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY MARUNONG SUMAYAW NG MGA LATEST DANCE STEPS SA KANILANG CAMPAIGN RALLIES


TAKATAK
TAKATAKTA
OCHO-OCHO
BELLY DANCING
"HAPPY FEET" STYLE

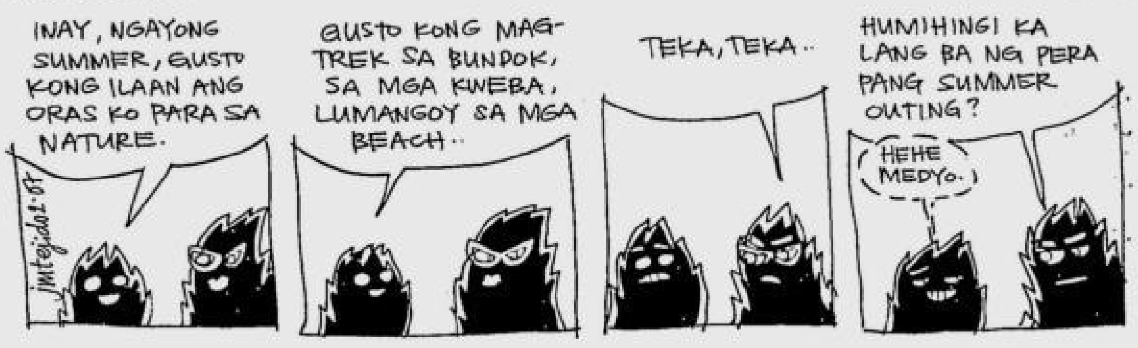
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! TSONG PATINGIN NGA NG SAGWAN MO? PARANG AMBIGAT KASI NUNG AKIN EH...
O
GAAN AH... PUTIK! AMBIGAT NGA NUNG AKIN O...
WOW TALAGA? MEN, BAKA NAKUHA MO 'YUNG SAGWAN NA URBAN LEGEND SA DRAGON BOAT NA 'TO... ANG SAGWAN NA MULA SA IMPYERNO!!
...KINORTE GAMIT ANG NGIPIN NG MGA KALANSAY NG MGA SINUMPANG DEMONYO SA KAILALIM-LALIMAN NG LUPAI.. PINABIGAT NG KASALANAN! ANG SAGWAN NI SATANAS!!
TUMIGIL KA'T NAPIPIKON NA 'KO HA.

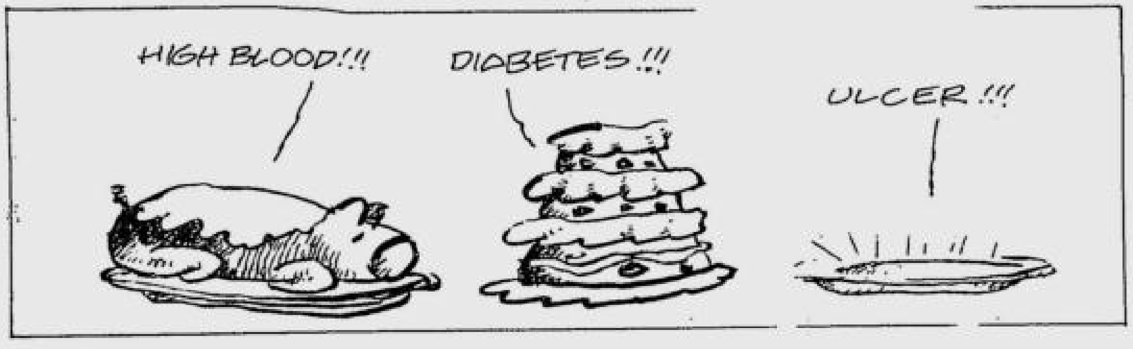
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, NGAYONG SUMMER, GUSTO KONG ILAAN ANG ORAS KO PARA SA NATURE.
GUSTO KONG MAG-TREK SA BUNDOK, SA MGA KWEBA, LUMANGOY SA MGA BEACH..
TEKA, TEKA..
HUMIHINGI KA LANG BA NG PERA PANG SUMMER OUTING?
HEHE MEDYO.
jmtejido1-07

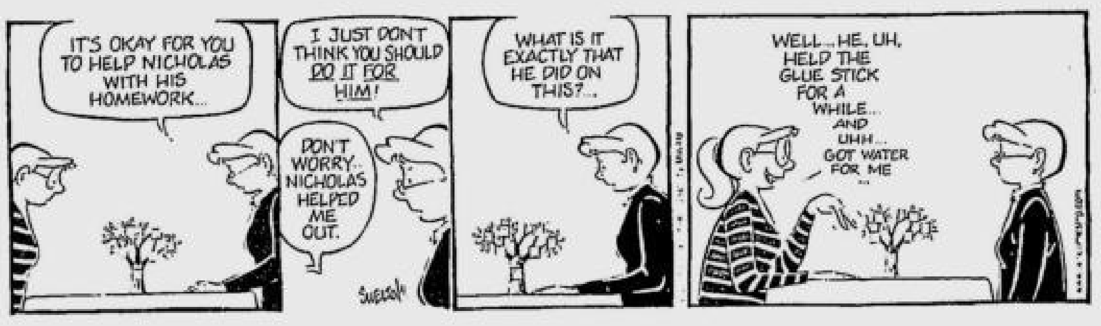
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

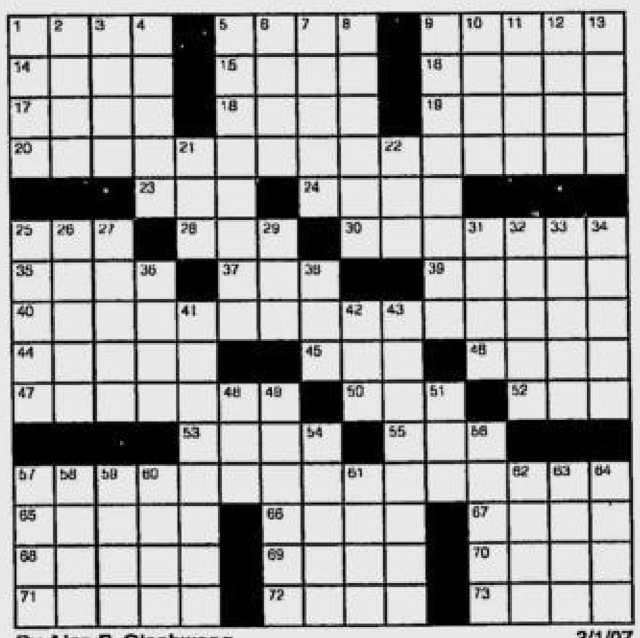

HIGH BLOOD!!!
DIABETES!!!
ULCER!!!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S OKAY FOR YOU TO HELP NICHOLAS WITH HIS HOMEWORK...
I JUST DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD DO IT FOR HIM!
DON'T WORRY.. NICHOLAS HELPED ME OUT.
WHAT IS IT EXACTLY THAT HE DID ON THIS?...
WELL... HE, UH, HELD THE GLUE STICK FOR A WHILE... AND UHH... GOT WATER FOR ME
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

3/1/07

ACROSS

1 Pare
5 Catchall label abbr.
9 Inner circle
14 Kenny Rogers hit
15 Revered figure
16 Regions
17 Manipulator
18 Slide sideways
19 After-bath powders
20 Start of Louis Aragon quote
23 Top limit
24 Declare
25 Lowly mil. rank
28 Kind of carpet or herring
30 Highest mountain
35 Cowardly Lion player
37 Fish story
39 Mathematical relationship
40 Part 2 of quote
44 Vexation
45 Haggard novel
46 Wise person
47 Like a zebra
50 __ Anne de Beaupre
52 Homer's neighbor
53 Citrus quenchers
55 Legal thing
57 End of quote
65 Soup server
66 Brainy inspiration
67 Part of U.A.E.
68 Wanted poster word
69 Ripened
70 Knights
71 Type of pasta
72 Discount word
73 Beatles film

DOWN

1 Sink stopper
2 Relaxation
3 Churchill's successor
4 Like sonnets and odes
5 Write a wrong?
6 Like a couch potato
7 The March King
8 Split in two
9 Party workers
10 Asian sea
11 Sandwich shop
12 Pool-table adjunct
13 Latin being
21 Egt.-Syr., once
22 RPM word
25 Drops heavily
26 Gem surface
27 Mirth
29 Half of MIV
31 Squealers
32 One of the Coen brothers
33 Blockade
34 Trifled
36 Sitar star Shankar
38 Tennis doubles?
41 From Katmandu
42 Expressions of uncertainty
43 Reconditioned tires
48 Announcer Hall
49 Repudiation
51 Always, to a poet
54 Marsh plant
56 Batter
57 Smacking blow
58 Hearty's partner
59 Thor's father
60 __ Bator, Mongolia
61 Victory signs
62 Sal's canal
63 Jurist Warren
64 Recipe meas.

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	U	M	■	C	H	A	D	■	C	A	S	E	S
L	O	S	E	■	L	A	D	E	■	O	U	T	R	E
O	R	A	D	■	O	L	I	O	■	T	R	E	A	T
B	Y	F	I	T	S	A	N	D	S	T	A	R	T	S
■	■	■	A	R	E	S	■	O	T	O	S	■	■	■
G	R	A	T	I	S	■	G	R	A	N	■	F	A	M
A	A	R	O	N	■	E	L	A	N	■	G	O	T	O
B	Y	T	R	I	A	L	A	N	D	E	R	R	O	R
L	O	I	S	■	N	E	S	T	■	T	A	U	N	T
E	N	E	■	D	O	C	S	■	T	H	Y	M	E	S
■	■	■	T	O	U	T	■	A	R	I	A	■	■	■
B	Y	H	O	O	K	O	R	B	Y	C	R	O	O	K
R	O	U	N	D	■	R	O	B	S	■	E	R	L	E
A	G	A	N	A	■	A	B	E	T	■	A	L	A	N
D	I	C	E	D	■	L	E	S	S	■	S	E	N	T

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3/1/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're bright and clever, which is why many of you master complex technical skills. You're also ambitious. You intend to achieve something in this lifetime. You have a keen appreciation of beauty, and many of you thrive in artistic professions. You look and dress well. Work hard to build or construct something in the coming year. Your rewards will soon follow.

Birthdate of: Ron Howard, director; Roger Daltry, musician; Harry Belafonte, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The residue of yesterday is with you still. That's why romance, relating to children, sports and entertaining situations seem to be a burden. (No big deal, really.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Don't worry if family discussions are a bit depressing today. Lots of people feel this way today. Stern Saturn has lined up with the Moon. (Gulp.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might feel worried about something today. By next week, all of this is history. Do your best to put a positive slant on things. (It never hurts.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You still have financial concerns today. (Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?) Be reassured that things will look quite different by next week.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're such a romantic. In part, this is why you might feel disappointed with a partner. Don't dwell on this. Things will appear quite different next week. (Thank heavens.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Don't beat yourself up about anything today. It's easy to feel depressed or down on yourself. But this is just a passing thing. Next week is a whole new movie.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't let the criticisms of friends get you down. Conversely, refrain from criticizing others. Just nod your head and smile.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a poor day to ask bosses for anything. They'll probably say no. Half of success is knowing how to pick your timing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Delays in travel plans or setbacks in educational matters or anything related to publishing and the media could disappoint you today. By next week, it's a different story.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Worries about debt, taxes, bills and insurance matters might plague you today. Fortunately, this is short-lived. Everything looks different by next week. (Whew!)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Partnerships and close friendships have their highs and lows. You can't deny this. Therefore, cut somebody some slack today. Easy does it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): The best way to handle today's energy is just to do some hard work. You'll be able to tackle boring, routine stuff because you want to get it out of the way. Then you can breathe a sigh of relief—job done!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	4	6						
1						6		
3			1	2			9	
		7		3	4			
		2	5		8	1		
			6	1		2		
	2			7	9			4
		9						5
						7	1	

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/01

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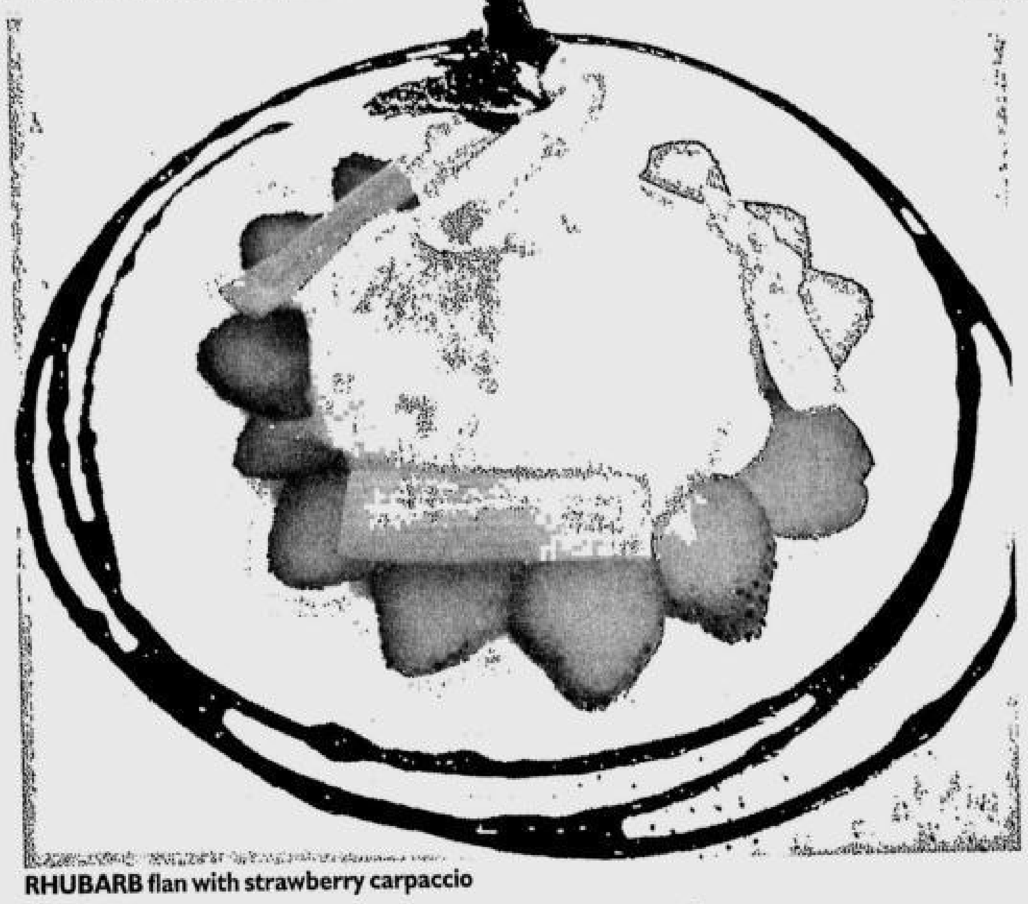
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	3	5	9	6	4	2	1	7
2	9	1	7	3	5	6	4	8
7	6	4	8	1	2	9	5	3
1	5	6	3	9	8	4	7	2
9	7	2	4	5	6	8	3	1
4	8	3	1	2	7	5	9	6
6	1	7	5	8	9	3	2	4
3	2	9	6	4	1	7	8	5
5	4	8	2	7	3	1	6	9

Difficulty Level ★★★



RHUBARB flan with strawberry carpaccio

Totally Swiss

By Micky Fenix

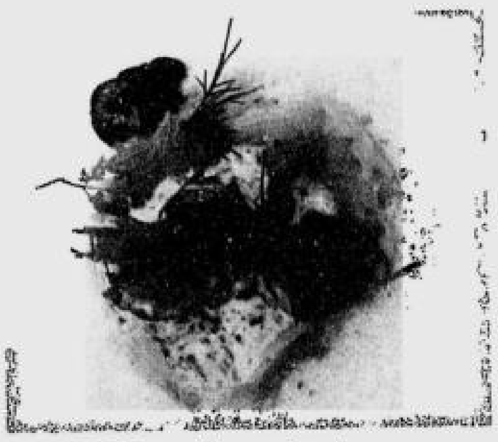
PEOPLE MUST HAVE BEEN surprised when a deep sound from what seemed like a big horn echoed through the Mandarin Oriental Manila lobby.

If they went up to the mezzanine, they would have seen a long Alpine horn that greeted guests to the opening of "A Culinary Journey to the Swiss Alps."

Guests at the ribbon-cutting included members of the Swiss Club that is celebrating its 100th year. That wouldn't be surprising if you look through the roster of companies in the country, some owned by the Swiss as far back as a century ago.

Hardly surprising though was being given cheese for our first appetizer. For, aside from chocolates, what is more Swiss than dairy products.

A mousse of *Tete de Moine* cheese also had rosettes of the cheese, which is how it is usually served. The curly flower shapes are usually made by shaving the cheese with a *girolle* or *skirret*.



ESCARGOT on mild sauerkraut

MOUSE of tete de moine cheese

Monk's head

Tete de Moine, meaning monk's head, is an old monastery mountain cheese. It is so called because when the top of the cylindrical cheese is removed, it looks like the head of a bald monk.

The mousse came with marinated cepe mushrooms and a Grissini stick.

Soup was cream of *ramsos*, a wild garlic. It did not have the garlicky taste you would expect but the milk was there.

We went back to appetizer mode when herb gratinated escargot was served on a mild sauerkraut. The light vinegary taste of the sauerkraut tempered the cheese element that went with the escargot already taken out of its shell.

Our table mostly chose the fish for the main course. It was pike perch fillet on a bed of risotto cooked in *merlot*. It worked—the red wine, the rice and the fish.

Everyone's eyes were on the meat dish. It was a beef tenderloin that had polenta underneath and a sausage above, cut to look like an octopus. The menu said it was "Top of Europe" indicating that it was one of the dishes served in the featured chef's restaurant.

Highest restaurant

Chef Ruedi Wittwer works at what is known as the highest restaurant, 3,750 meters high on the Swiss Alps, and so has earned the nickname "Top of Europe."

The Glazier restaurant in Jungfraujoch, Switzerland is reached only by train. It opens only for lunch, and only during the seasons when weather is good. Wittwer said his restaurant, which had mostly tourists as patrons, could serve whatever was preferred. For a mostly Indian group, for instance, he can serve Indian cuisine.

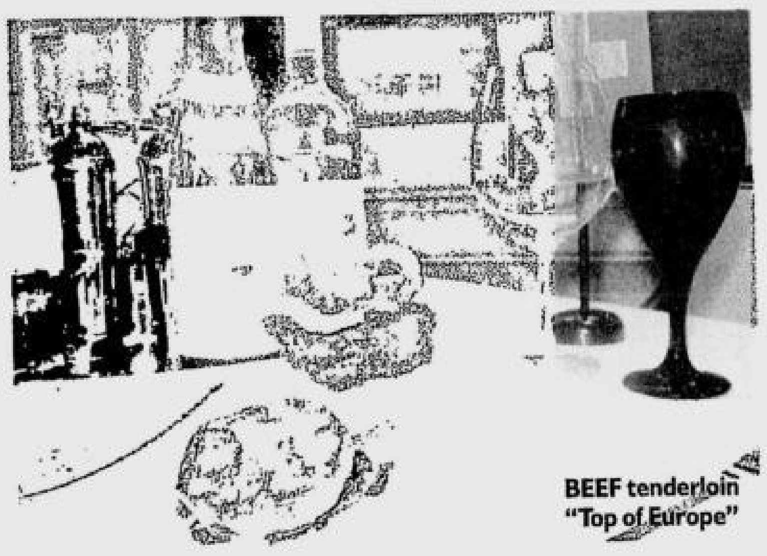
Wittwer's experience encompasses 25 years in hotels, restaurants and cruise ships. He said he had worked with many Filipino chefs, especially on cruise ships. He has also traveled around the world promoting Swiss cuisine.

Dessert was a whitish mound of rhubarb flan with strawberries, cut thinly, thus the chef called the style *carpaccio*.

Diners during the Swiss food festival will be treated to other very interesting dishes like absinth-scented bisque of sweet water crayfish, roast venison with lavender herbs and Toblerone fondue.

The Alpine horn that greeted guests also made lunch interesting. Musicians kept things lively by drawing musical sounds from nontraditional instruments like a saw, a coin going around a bowl and cow bells. But what is Swiss music without the yodeling and so it was there to add to the atmosphere.

"A Culinary Journey to the Swiss Alps" is ongoing at The Tivoli, Mandarin Oriental Manila until March 4.



BEEF tenderloin "Top of Europe"

CHEF Ruedi Wittwer of The Glazier Restaurant in Switzerland

Salt of the earth and other. . .

From page C6

salt lick for their cattle.

I finally used *tultul* on a side trip to Roxas City. At the country kitchen of Sonie Altavas, a salt container had several pieces of the block salt inside. Called *dukduk* there, these were brought to the table as we had dinner.

Taking a piece, I patted it on my rice then tasted the result. What I got was salted rice, a pleasingly mild saltiness. Now I understand how a poor man's diet of rice and salt is possible.

In Iloilo, *tultul* is also called *duldul*. When my cook from Samar saw the pieces, she said they also had what she called *dudu*.

So now I'm curious about other places where this block salt is made and used. Just e-mail me and I may go there.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Tasting notes from Spain

Part III

SAMPLING the 25 best wines of Spain during a tasting session at Madrid Fusion

SHERWIN LAO EXPLAINED THE 2S3T approach to wine tasting. The 2S stands for sight and smell while 3T means taste, touch and totality.

Sherwin went into specifics on how these factors are to be considered in judging a wine:

1. Sight – physical look of the wine

Pour wine no more than 2/3 full into a stem glass. Hold the glass up by the stem and lift against the light to determine the color of the wine. Analyze color, hue, shade, clarity and even age of the wine. During this process, check cork droppings.

- White wine color ranges – pale yellow, straw, darker yellowish green hue, bright gold, and a range from amber to brown. The darker the color, the older the wine or it be a sign of oxidation, which is natural if wine is five years or older or when the cork begins to leak.
- Red wine color ranges – bright ruby, violet, garnet to very dark, almost black. Luster fades and the wine becomes dull the older it gets. An old red can turn dark brown, very close to brandy-like in color.

2. Smell – or the "nose" of the wine

Swirl wine glass and put the glass just a few millimeters under the nose. Whiff, sniff, smell a few times, stopping every time to re-swirl the glass. Swirling aerates the wine and releases the aromas. Good wine will have many different aromas, evolving with new scents, differing in intensity and levels, with every new swirl. In terms of smell, the two most common wine terms are aromas and bouquet.

- Aroma – from the inherent qualities of the wine varietal/the grape itself. Chardonnay can have lime, lemon and peach flavors or scents while Cabernet Sauvignon may have black currant, black berry, eucalyptus. Gamay—very floral; Syrah or Shiraz—burnt fruit; Merlot—more earthy and cherry
- Bouquet – has more to do with "winemaker" influence/external factors. Example: wine described as oaky means the wine was oak barrel-aged. "Buttery" or creamy wine must have gone through malolactic or secondary fermentation where the harsh malic acid found in grapes is transformed into friendlier lactic acids. Other bouquet descriptors include chocolate, toffee, cinnamon, etc.

Bouquet also refers to the developed aromas over a period of time, when wine is aged longer. Wines kept at optimum condition over time make aroma more subtle. Some evolve new scents altogether.

3. Taste – Take a sip. Taste refers to sweetness, sourness and bitterness.

Sweetness comes from residual grape sugar, sourness from the natural grape acid, bitterness from the grape skins, stems and seeds. In wine jargon, we refer to un-sweet as dry. Dry means "absence of sugar." For sourness, we say acidic. For bitterness, we normally say it is tannic.

The term "acidic" refers mainly to white wines, while "tannic" is used to describe red wine almost exclusively. Wine with 1-2 percent residual sugar is already considered semi-sweet. The majority of wines, unless specified as late harvest or dessert, are normally in the semi-dry and dry range. Most New World wines are semi-dry, while most Old World wines are dry.

4. Touch – refers to the mouth feel and the finish of the wine

- After the sipping, you now take in a generous amount of wine in your mouth. Let your tongue touch the wine by moving it side to side in your mouth to get the mouth feel. From mouth feel, one is able to detect the wine's body—light, medium or full-bodied. Full-bodied wine has the texture of creamy milk, thick and viscous, while a light-bodied is closer to the texture of water. Anything in between is a variation of medium.
- After the wine is swallowed, we get the finish, the length of the finish. Is it a fast-finisher, lingering a few seconds, or does it have a long, almost "always at the edge of your mouth" unending type of finish?

5. Totality – Good wine must be sound and well-balanced. After going through the four steps, the wine is then judged for balance, coherence, consistency and overall goodness.

At wine competitions, each element is given corresponding weights in points. From a 10-point mass system, the normal assigned weights are: 1 point–sight, 3 points–smell, 2 points–taste, 3 points–touch and 1 point–totality.

Dare to use 2S3T

In time you'll be "talking wine" with tasting notes of an expert that reads ... "3-year-old Barossa Shiraz, South Australia: Dark ruby color, powerful nose of raspberry flambé, integrated oak, semi-dry, full-bodied with grainy texture and long spicy lingering finish at the end; a wine with great depth that can improve further with patience of longer bottle aging."

Thanks to the Spanish Government, its Commercial Office, especially Jose Miguel Cortes, Jose Primo Santos and ICEX, for continuing to think of me as competent enough to give justice to Spain's table pleasures.

To learn more about Spanish food and wine, join us at the seminars conducted by Instituto Cervantes (5261482-85).

E-mail the author: raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

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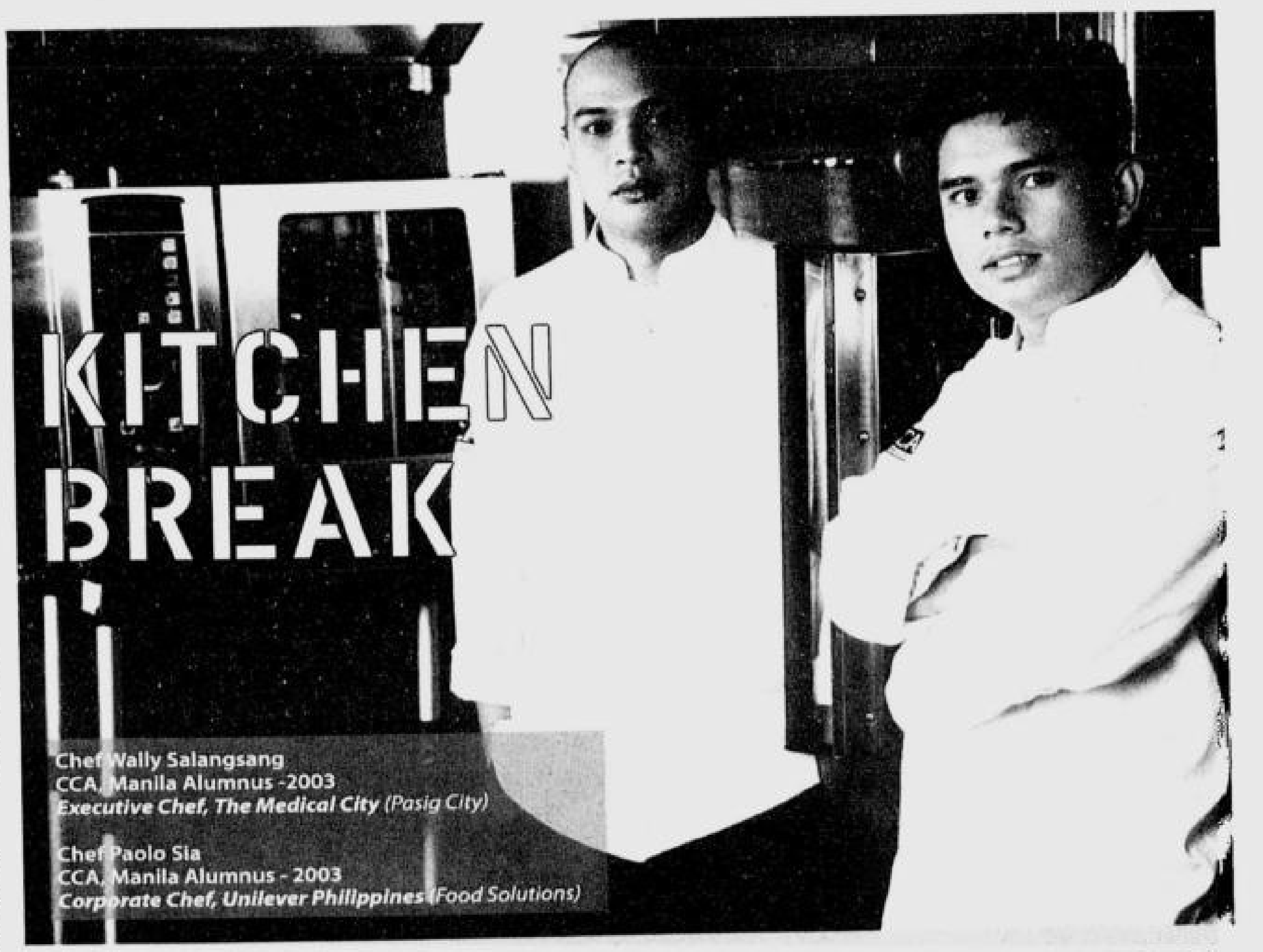

KITCHEN
BREAK
Chef Wally Salangsang
CCA, Manila Alumnus -2003
Executive Chef, The Medical City (Pasig City)
Chef Paolo Sia
CCA, Manila Alumnus - 2003
Corporate Chef, Unilever Philippines (Food Solutions)

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af
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P4,200 - MAR 5 - 6 - Learn 10 diff. kinds of icing flowers, figure piping. Bake & decorate your basket weave cake using boiled icing.
P2,850 - MAR 7 - Bake & decorate your own character birthday cake using star tips, simple borders & icing flowers.
P4,750 - MAR 8 - 9 - Wedding cake assembly: Bake & decorate your own 2 tiered wedding cake using fancy borders, scrolls, strings & icing flowers. NEXT SCHED: APR 9 - 13
2. MAR 12 - 15 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD - (P11,500)
New method on Gumpaste Flowers: Using Mrs. Florendo's Flower Board. Objects, Marzipan, Ribbon Insertion, Finest String Works, Lace Pieces, New Recipe of Fondant & Chocolate Fondant. NEXT SCHED: APR 16 - 19
3. SATURDAYS // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE BAKING - (P3,000)
Banana Cake, Apple Almond Bars, Carrot Cake, Chocolate Cake, Whole Wheat Bread, Whole Wheat Raisin Bread.
4. MAR 14 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT 2 KINDS - (P5,000)
Using Lace Mats, New Rolling Pin W/ Designs, Swags & Ribbons, Non-Stick boards w/ Flowers & Veiners & Quilling NEXT SCHED: APR 18
5. MAR 16 // 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM - NEW CAKES - (P3,000)
Piña Colada, Tres Leches, Mocha Cake w/ egg white mocha icing, Chocolate Cherry Cake NEXT SCHED: APR 20
6. MAR 19 - 23 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - (P13,500. For whole course)
P2,750 - MAR 19 - Cakes: plain, mocha, choco, orange chiffon cakes, pound cake, sponge cake, moist choco cake.
P2,850 - MAR 20 - Cakes & Roll: malacañang roll, chocolate roll, brownies, pineapple upside-down, custard cake, mamon.
P2,850 - MAR 21 - Breads: pan de sal, dinner rolls, buns, pan de coco, ensaymada, honey bread & raisin bread.
P2,950 - MAR 22 - Pies: Buko pie, custard pie, pineapple pie, apple pie, mango pie.
P2,850 - MAR 23 - Pastries & Cookies: almond tart, San Nicolas cookies, camachile, oatmeal cookies, lengua de gato, coconut macaroons. NEXT SCHED: APR 23 - 27
7. MAR 19 - 23 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - COLD PORCELAIN FLOWER COURSES WITH PORCELAIN RECIPE - (P5,000)
(Each set is lesson covered for one day) - a) Sampaguita, Sunflower, Waling-waling; b) Rose, Catleya, Cymbidium; c) Magnolia, Gerbera, Lilies; d) Open Rose, Hydrangeas, Grapes. *COLD PORCELAIN DOLLS(P11,000) by appointment* NEXT SCHED:APR 23 - 27
8. MAR 26 - 30 // 8:00AM - 5:30PM - SPECIAL BAKING - (P14,000. For whole course)
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P3,000 - MAR 26 - All Sponge Cakes: Nalusko cake, Black Forest cake, Decadence cake, Fan Torte cake, Fruit Torte cake.
P3,000 - MAR 27 - All Chiffon Cakes: Mango cake, Ube cake, Pistachio cake, Rocky Road cake, Coffee Crunch cake.
P3,000 - MAR 28 - All Butter Cakes: Butter Rum cake, Carrot cake, Kahlua cake, Moist Chocolate cake, Special Fruit cake.
P3,000 - MAR 29 - Cheesecakes: Blueberry, Mango, Tiramisu, Cookies & Cream, New York Cheesecake.
P3,000 - MAR 30 - Meringues: Sansrival, Solothurn, Queens Torte, Braso de Mercedez, Pineapple Meringue Pie
NEXT SCHED: APR 30 - MAY 4 / FOR SPECIAL SCHEDULE PLS. CALL

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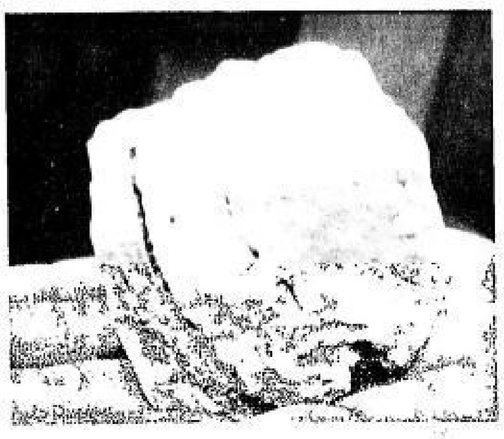
COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Salt of the earth and other organic matter



TULTUL, the block salt of Iloilo

WHEN WE WERE CONVERSING about eating with our *lolas* in the old days, my Iloilo guide, Eugene Jamerlan, said his grandmother gave each of her grandchildren a piece of block salt.

It was placed in small individual cups, each one different so they knew which belonged to whom. When eating, the block salt was patted on hot rice to give it a salty flavoring. Eugene called it *tultul*.

My curiosity was stoked because it was something unknown to me. I was told itinerant vendors sold the *tultul* at Iloilo markets, especially during the town's weekly market day.

We timed visits on just such days but never found those blocks. Somehow the seller was always gone when we reached the market.

It was also peculiar that not many people in Iloilo knew about *tultul*. I got puzzled looks when I asked. That scared me because that meant *tultul* might no longer be around and our cuisine would have lost another traditional food product.

I vowed to look for *tultul* when I returned. And so did my guide. Almost daily Eugene would report about being disappointed. He also enlisted some people to help him with the search.

Finally a text message said he now had a piece of *tultul*. And that was the first thing he showed me as soon as I was back in Iloilo.

The *tultul* looked like white coral with a gray base that looked like cement. I ran my finger on its surface then tasted my finger. It was salty.

Source

Now that I had my prized *tultul*, the next thing I had to do was find out where it came from. No one could tell me if it was mined or made, a byproduct perhaps of salt-making.

An idea came to me when one of my hosts during the Jaro fiesta couldn't get over the fact that she heard the word *tultul* again. She said her family dipped it first into *manchada*, oil used to fry chicken, before patting it on rice. She said the last time she had it was during the war when they stayed at their place in Guimaras.

Most of the people who knew about *tultul* said my best bet was this former sub-province of Iloilo, now a full-fledged province. The island is about 30 minutes by banca from Iloilo City.

My trip to Guimaras wasn't to look for *tultul* but to research at the Mango Institute and then to go to the Trappist Monastery. Yes, it was about food but it was also to revisit the island I found so fascinating.

It was after my short stay at the monastery chapel that Eugene showed me a magazine he found in our hired jeepney which had a feature on the *tultul*. "Serendipity," he said. And to think I didn't really pray to have my *tultul* question answered.

Process

The article was in the government publication of the island, Iwag sang Guimaras. The author, Paul Vincent de la Cruz, detailed how the block salt was made. It also contained a picture of the couple who made *tultul*.

The jeepney driver we contracted said he could drive us to the couple's address in Barangay Hoskyn, in the capital town of Jordan. We arrived at Sitio Cabadiangan and were just in time to see Emma Ganila bringing in a *kain* of what looked like trash taken from the beachfront.

Emma's husband Serafin joined us later and both described what it took to produce *tultul*. When they finished their tale, I thought that it should make people who espoused organic and natural products ecstatic.

And hopefully some chemist out there can give me the scientific explanation for the process.

Tultul-making starts with the gathering of what can be considered as discards on the shore such as coconut husks, twigs, broken coral—anything except things made of plastic.

The discards are gathered into a pile and covered with dried branches of bamboo and dried coconut leaves. The pile is set on fire then doused later with sea water. This step is done again and again for six days until a sackful of ashes is obtained.

The ashes are placed in a *kain* and brought near the house for the second stage. Seawater is poured on the ashes and the liquid is collected in a pail after it goes through bamboo pipes. This step is done twice.

The strained water is then placed on several halved cooking oil tin containers. These are placed on an improvised stove made of two rows of hardened sand with the fire set in between.

The water is boiled. After it evaporates, the containers are filled again. When reduced, the result is the hardened salt.

What made the salt stick together, said Serapin, was a bit of coconut milk mixed in while the water boiled.

Emma brought out a piece of *tultul* that she said she sold on town market days for P10. And then she gave it to me. It's a prized piece mainly because of the generosity of the Ganilas. She said some ranchers bought *tultul* as

SALT/C5

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MICKEY PERZ from Switzerland

House of mirth, neuroses and angst

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

DR. RANDY DELlosa, who served as neuro-psychological screener on "Pinoy Big Brother Season 2," has described the new housemates as "a merry mix of neurotic, normal and 'angsty' people."

True enough, the first six introduced to the public on Sunday consisted of colorful characters:

Gee-Ann Abrahan, a cheerleader who took along her "baby," a doll named Pamela, to the house; Nel Rapuz, a nurse from Iloilo and token ordinary guy who considers his "exotic beauty" as ticket to fame; Wendy Valdez, a beauty queen-model who grew up in the squatter's area in Navotas; Saicy Aguila, a dance instructor from Bacolod who failed her education licensure exam; Ezekiel Dimaguila, a Filipino-Australian addicted to the online game World of Warcraft, and Mickey Perz, a hip-hop dancing champion from Switzerland.

They were just half of this season's dozen. (Among those to be launched in the next few days are an injured basketball player and a recovering junkie.)

Sunday's show had a military theme to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the People Power revolution.

Neuro-psycho tests

An estimated 30,000 young people had auditioned in places near (Bicol and Davao) and far (Japan and Italy).

Dellosa told INQUIRER Entertainment that the new housemates had passed a battery of psychological and neurological tests required by Big Brother.

"No signs of abnormality emerged," he volunteered, but quickly issued a caveat: "The tests were valid only at the time they were taken. Undue stress in the house could [alter] their personalities."

Are the housemates equipped with the necessary tools to cope with the "isolation" and "instant celebrity" that come with being cooped up in Big Brother's house—with its 42 cameras and 42 microphones—for 126 days? "They are equipped," Dellosa said. "All of them have experienced difficulties in life."

Even Gee-Ann who, at 21, seems a bit too old to play with dolls?

The screener explained: "She thinks it's cute—and it's reinforced by her friends. [Maybe] that's how she copes with stress. She reverts to a childhood fantasy life."

How about Nel, the son of a policeman and policewoman, who seems fixated on his looks?

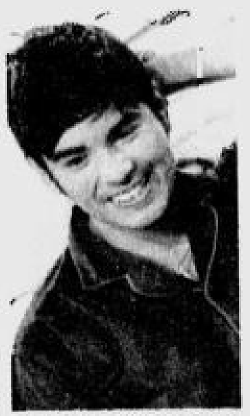
Dellosa's theory: "Maybe self-deprecating humor is his strategy. His

HOUSE/ D2

The new PBB batch is described as a 'merry, colorful mix'

JASON escorts Saicy Aguila, a dance instructor from Bacolod.

WENDY VALDEZ from Navotas



EZEKIEL DIMAGUILA from Sydney

BIG BROTHER'S house at Eugenio Lopez Drive in Quezon City

LEAP OF FAITH. Host Jason Gainza asks the housemates to jump off the military truck.

PHOTOS BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

Shame and scandal in the show biz family

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

CELEBRITIES KNOW THAT SCANDAL AND intrigue are perversely appealing to the viewing public, so some of them seem to be even proud when announcing or admitting to their dirty laundry or the skeleton festering in their room-sized closets.

A few even concoct false tales of wild and wooly sins and peccadilloes, the better to sell tickets or albums, or to shore up dangerously slumping careers.

The popularity of shame and scandal as grist for the show biz mill has increased so much that, these days, the entertainment world is known more for its real or manufactured excesses than for the quality of its products.

This is an unfortunate state of affairs that you'd think show biz leaders would strive mightily to reform or redress, but no such image cleanup has been initiated. Instead, some producers themselves play the "scandal without shame" game to promote their own products, making the situation go from worse to worst.

How shortsighted and cynically utilitarian can you get? *Very*.

Entertainment people sometimes complain that they get no respect from society and little help or subsidy from government. Well, the low and cheap industry image that they have allowed to fester could be a factor in this general disdain.

To be respected and assisted, industries have to show that they make an important contribution to the community. If an industry is associated with shame and scandal, what kind of "contribution" is *that*?

The sordid situation has been aided and abetted by tabloids and show biz-oriented talk shows on TV, which bank on scandal, intrigue and gossip to sell copies or jack up ratings.

In fact, the perverse interest thus encouraged has become so intense that stories about show biz scandals have infested even early-evening and late-late newscasts!

This "gossip gone legit" development is doubly to be deplored, because it further legitimizes the public's perverse fascination with celebrities' personal filth. So, those ostensibly more responsible newscasts have become part of the problem, as well!

It's time for more people and organizations to become a part of the *solution*.

First, responsible show biz leaders should speak up against the dismal trend, and urge stars and starlets to stress the positive in their personal lives.

Next, watchdog groups in civil society, education and government should loudly protest the "scandalization" of media, particularly when it comes to the coverage of the entertainment world.

Tabloids and show biz-oriented talk shows should also police their own ranks to curtail the pollution of our communal atmosphere.

Celebrities should wash their dirty laundry in private, where it belongs, and build their careers on creative achievement, not personal excess.

As for the bottom line, the buck stops with *us*, the members of the show biz audience, and consumers of its productions and gossip.

Let us patronize responsible and substantial productions and reject scandal, intrigue and gossip, because they result in nothing good and everything bad.

Scandal is not delicious, it's poisonous. Intrigue isn't exciting, it's an ethical bummer. And gossip saps the mind, curdles the heart and slays the soul. So, please desist.

Celebrities should wash their dirty laundry in private, where it belongs, and build their careers on creative achievement, not personal excess

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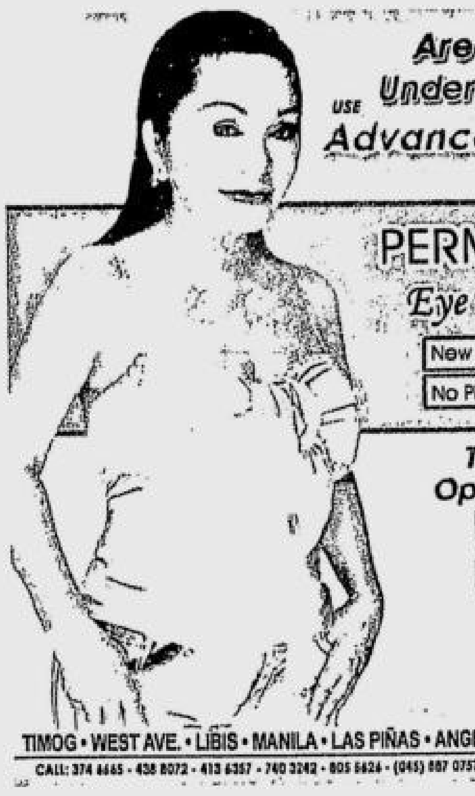

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Why they should stay together

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

KRISTINE HERMOSA AND OYO BOY Sotto were spotted in Pricemart Makati. According to an eyewitness (andisanchez2006@yahoo.com), they were quite sweet. Maybe they were just enjoying each other's company while shopping. Priceless joy amid prying eyes?

New couple

Angel Aquino and MUP ("Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas") co-host **Lui Villaruz** (ex of **China Cojuangco**) are the newest lovebirds in Showbizlandia. This means Angel has split up with her longtime BF/musician **Norby**. Angel is one of the sweetest girls on earth. Her heart deserves a foretaste of paradise.

Multi-million reasons

Could it be true that beleaguered couple **James Yap** and **Kris Aquino** are obliged to stay together till 2009 to keep up with multi-million advertising deals? They have enough domestic problems. Why aggravate matters by getting into legal disputes? But with James' track record with women, Kris may need to subject him to a polygraph test monthly!

At the height of the James Yap-**Hope Centeno** dangerous liaison, James would reportedly text Hope: "Game k n b na. In ka na b?" It was supposedly a way of saying the coast was clear whenever Kris tapes the game show. And Hope allegedly texts him a go-signal if she's already at the clinic. I wonder if Hope borrows Kris' lines— *"Atras! Abante! Kamay sa dibdib!"*

But in their forbidden game, nobody wins!

'Palimos ng Pag-ibig'

ABS-CBN's newest prime time treat (premieres March 5), "Sineserye Presents: Palimos ng Pag-Ibig" is a remake of the most controversial drama of its time: A love triangle that involves a man (**Edu Manzano**), his wife (**Vilma Santos**) and another woman whose baby the couple wants to buy (**Dina Bonnevie**).

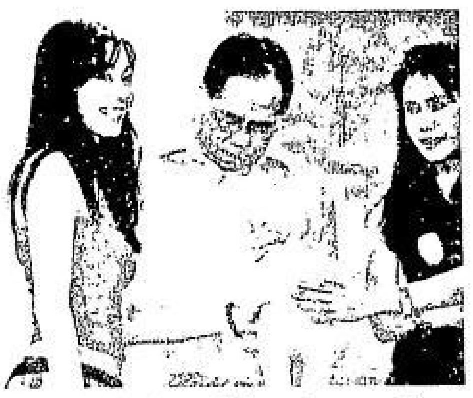
Rica Peralejo takes on Vi's part, **Diether Ocampo** reprises Edu's role and Kristine Hermosa plays Dina's baby-maker role. I asked Diet what's the most embarrassing thing he did that comes close to begging for love. He revealed: "I asked the stewardess to hand over my love letter and announce how much I missed the recipient. That made her cut her trip short and come back to me right away." Ooh la la! *C'est l'amour*!

'Happy Hearts'

The **Shaina Magdayao-Rayver Cruz** love team will be launched to full stardom via Regal Entertainment's "Happy Hearts." It's a touching story about a father and son, a budding romance and true love between a man and another man.

Rustom Padilla plays a closet gay with a live-in partner portrayed by **Wendell Ramos**. Their hilarious scenes are something to watch out for. If Guy and Pip had a doll named Ma. Leonora Teresa (which had its own fans' club!), Shai-Ver (as their fans call Shaina and Rayver) have a Chihuahua called Rain. It will surely rain love when the movie hits the-aters on March 14.

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.



GEE-ANN Abrahan, 21, from Quezon City, chooses the doll Pamela as her house companion, as her uncle and mom look on.

House . . .

From page D1

many romantic conquests [nine serious relationships and six flings, according to Nel] are ways to compensate for his looks."

He depicted Wendy as "the ultimate survivor"; Saicy as "anxiety-ridden, but hard-working"; Mickey, as "passionate and generous"; and Ezekiel as "spontaneous and fun-loving."

Will cultural differences come into play in the house dynamics?

"More than culture, their individual personalities may prove crucial," said Dellosa, who was resident psychologist during the show's past three editions.

Case in point: Mickey, earlier said to speak only German, actually knows Filipino, it turns out.

As for the language of love, are romantic relationships possible?

"Yes, especially among those who are emotionally needy. But, as in previous editions, those relationships may not last outside of the house," Dellosa clarified.

More than anything else, PBB is a competition. That much is clear to the housemates. At stake is P1 million, a water-refilling station franchise, brand-new car and European tour.

In Dellosa's professional opinion, what does it take to win?

"[Ideally] someone who has determination, good values and positive interpersonal relationship skills [should win]. However, we can expect viewers to vote for the underdog. Regional affiliation and personal preferences also affect their vote."

NEL RAPUZ, 25, from Iloilo, is a hard-working and fun-loving son, according to his parents, who are both police officers.

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10 NUMBER 23
11 YOU GOT ME
12 YOU GOT ME

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11 NUMBER 23
12 FLUSHED AWAY

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10 MUSIC AND LYRICS

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3 YOU GOT ME
2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00
G
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30
PG-13

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1 FLUSHED AWAY
MTRCB GP
1.05, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
2 YOU GOT ME
MTRCB GP
12:10, 2:30, 4:50 7:10 9:30
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
MTRCB PG-13
12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
4 PRIMEVAL
MTRCB R-13
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PRIMEVAL
R13
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8:20,10:30
IT'S A BOYGIRL THING
PG13
1:45,3:55,6:05,
8:15,10:25
YOU GOT ME
G
1:10,3:25,5:40,
7:55,10:10
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First 4 'Idol' casualties blame bad song choice

NICOLE TRANQUILLO

AMY KREBS

PAUL KIM

RUDY CARDENAS

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

FOUR "AMERICAN IDOL" SEMI-FINALISTS were booted out last week.

Paul Kim, 25, Amy Krebs, 22, Nicole Tranquillo, 20, and Rudy Cardenas, 28, agreed they were done in by a less-than-great choice of songs.

In a teleconference arranged by Star World, they discussed this with INQUIRER Entertainment.

Paul, shoeless onstage as usual, had sung "Careless Whisper," a Wham! original that, he said, wasn't his first, or second, or even third pick. "My top five choices didn't clear," he recalled, "so I had to go with option number six, which I wasn't really comfortable with. Obviously, it showed in my performance that I wasn't feeling the song."

It was a little different in Amy's case. She had chosen a song that she loved, Bonnie Raitt's "I Can't Make You Love Me." Judge Simon Cowell's appraisal: "You have the personality of a candle."

In hindsight, Amy said that she probably should have gone with "something more uptempo" to address the personality issue.

Nicole, who sang Rufus and Chaka Khan's "Stay," almost got a compliment from the petulant Cowell. He said she could definitely sing, but that it "wasn't enough." Cowell reiterated the importance of choosing the right song.

Asked how she felt about that now, the contestant from Philadelphia said, "I have no regrets about what I sang. It ... was definitely me, my style and it fit my voice. But it might be nice to see how singing another song would have turned out. Maybe people didn't dig it."

For Rudy, knowing he was taking the stage ahead of the pack had resulted in a great deal of pressure.

Said the young man from North Hollywood who sang Edward Winter Group's "Free Ride": "It was tough opening the brand-new season of the biggest show to ever hit the airwaves. I just wanted to go out there and kill it. Did I overdo it?" His conclusion: "Maybe I should have picked a different song."

Four more contestants—two males and two females—will be sent home tomorrow. Let's see if it's still going to be about the song.

"American Idol" airs on Star World Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 6 p.m. live via satellite, with replays at 8 p.m. and 11: 30 p.m. It also airs on ABC 5 at 10 p.m. on the same days.

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CINEMA 1 YOU GOT ME 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 GP
CINEMA 2 GHOST RIDER 11:45, 2:25, 5:00 7:35, 10:10 PG-13
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CINEMA 3 ITS A BOY GIRL THING 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 PG-13
CINEMA 4 FLUSHED AWAY 11:15, 1:25, 3:35 5:45, 7:55, 10:10 GP
CINEMA 5 THE PRIMEVAL 10:45, 1:00, 3:15 5:30, 7:45, 10:00 R-13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

March 06, 2007	EDNA LEDESMA	8:00 PM
	" DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "	
March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30, 2007	TABANG · PILIYA ... SEC. JOEY LINA SEC. ANGIE REYES · CHAIRMAN BAYANI F.	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 9, 2007	DAVE	8:30 PM
March 10, 2007	JOHN LESACA	8:00 PM
March 15, 22, 29, 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

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PRIMEVAL 12:25 / 2:45 / 5:05 / 7:25 / 9:45
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
FLUSHED AWAY 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA 3:20, 7:40
NUMBER 23 1:10 / 5:30 / 9:50
EPIC MOVIE 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40
GHOST RIDER 2:20 / 4:50, 7:20 / 9:50
MUSIC & LYRICS 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45
PRIMEVAL 2:10 / 4:30 / 6:50 / 9:10

ALIMALL 5
1 PRIMEVAL 1:15 / 3:35 / 5:55 / 8:15
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
3 YOU GOT ME 12:00 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
4 THE PROMISE 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
5 GHOST RIDER 1:05 / 3:35 / 6:05 / 8:35
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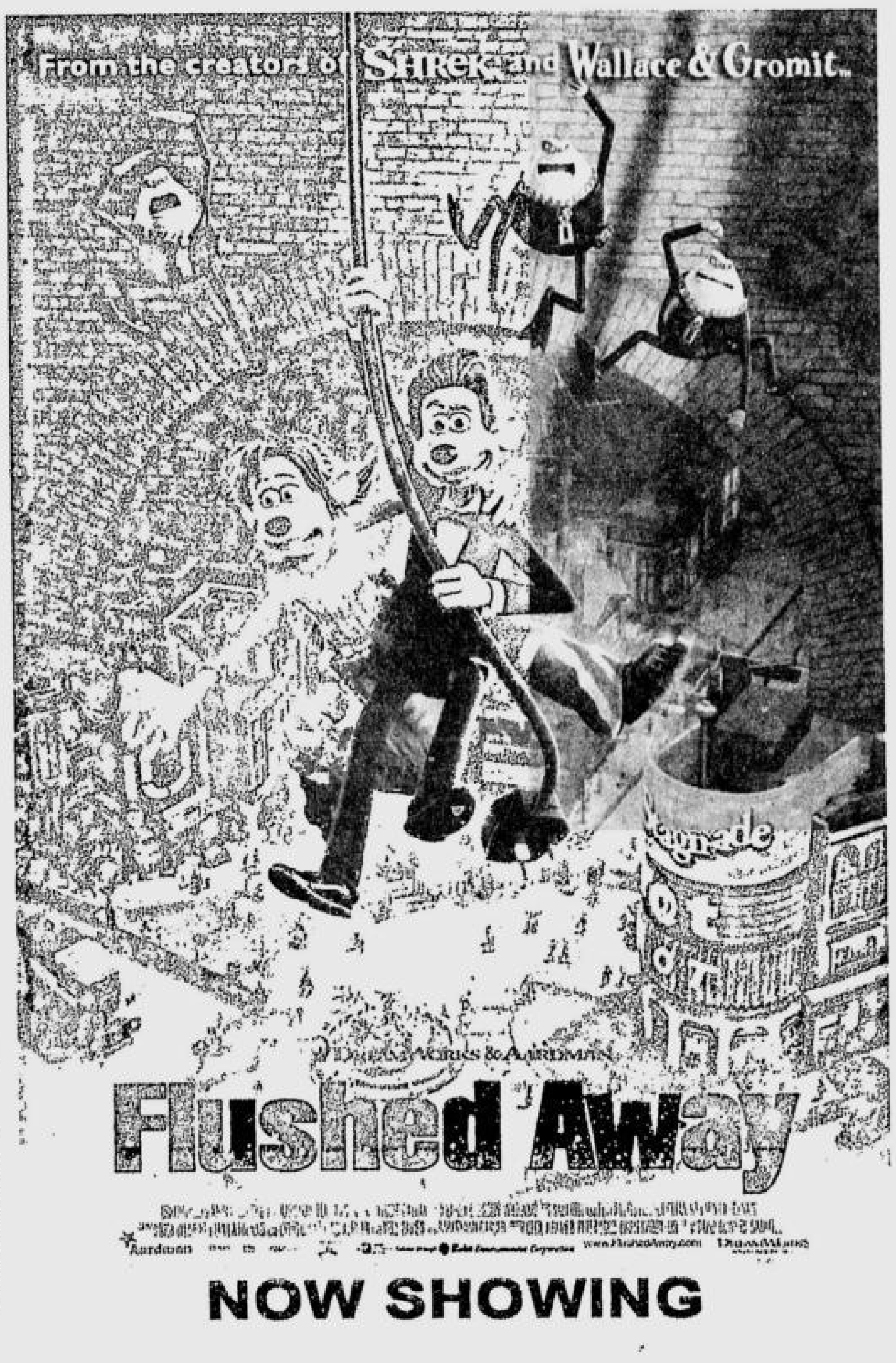
March 9, Friday 8 pm



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GALLERIA ... 632-8116
1 GHOST RIDER • THX
2 PRIMEVAL
3 indieSine: PEPOT ARTISTA
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 YOU GOT ME
6 FLUSHED AWAY
7 KABUL EXPRESS
8 EPIC MOVIE
MUSIC and LYRICS
9 THE NUMBER 23
10 BRIDGE of TERABITHIA

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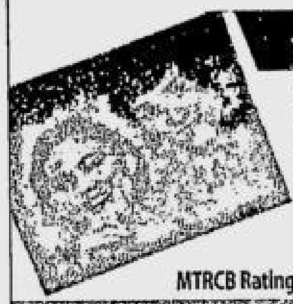
MTRCB Rating: G
ONLY AT indieSine, Robinsons Movieworld Galleria!



ERMITA Ticket Price P110 536-7809 to 12
1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE NUMBER 23
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA
3 GHOST RIDER
EPIC MOVIE
4 indieSine: ROMEO and JULIET
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME
7 FLUSHED AWAY

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Robinsons Pioneer
(EDSA to Pioneer Side)
MARCH 03 (Saturday)
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METRO EAST Ticket Price P100 682-8193 / 682-8199
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3 ITS A BOY GIRL THING
4 BRIDGE of TERABITHIA
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 GHOST RIDER
7 THE NUMBER 23
8 YOU GOT ME

NOVALICHES Ticket Price P80 935-3291 / 936-3229-30
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 FLUSHED AWAY
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 GHOST RIDER

PIONEER Ticket Price P100 587-5378
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 FLUSHED AWAY
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STA. ROSA Ticket Price P75 / 80 (049) 837-0907
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 TROIKA
4 THE FOUNTAIN

LIPA Ticket Price P90 (043) 757-3884 (043) 312-5876
1 GHOST RIDER
2 TROIKA
3 THE CLEANER
4 YOU GOT ME

DASMARIÑAS Ticket Price P75 / 80 (046) 416-[illegible]
1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 BOA

ANGELES Ticket Price P90 (045) 892-2348
1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN/BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

IMUS Ticket Price P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-3188
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STARMILLS Ticket Price P75 / 80 (045) 878-1827
1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 THE PROMISE

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 THE MESSENGERS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 APOCALYPTO

ILOILO Ticket Price P60 50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070
1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 APOCALYPTO

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1 (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
2 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
3 (DOLBY)	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	MUSIC AND LYRICS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	GHOST RIDER
2	BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3	YOU GOT ME
4	PRIMEVAL

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7265150

3	PRIMEVAL
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	GHOST RIDER
5	RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 8433994

1	THE PROMISE
2	YOU GOT ME
3	GHOST RIDER
4	PRIMEVAL

THEATRES
[illegible]

1	MUSIC & LYRICS
2	BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3	YOU GOT ME

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

★	YOU GOT ME
★	BABEL
★	RESRVED
★	RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS)	BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 (SDDS)	GHOST RIDER
3 (DTS)	EPIC MOVIE
4 GOLD (DTS)	YOU GOT ME
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 GOLD (SDDS)	PRIMEVAL
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
8 (SDDS)	YOU GOT ME
9 (DTS)	NUMBER 23
10 (SDDS)	THE PROMISE

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
2 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
3 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
4 (DOLBY)	RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER
2	PRIMEVAL
3	YOU GOT ME
4	THE PROMISE
5	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	THE PROMISE
2	THE MESSENGER
3	TROIKA
4	RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	YOU GOT ME
2	PRIMEVAL
3	GHOST RIDER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	PRIMEVAL
2	APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY SR)	PRIMEVAL
2	YOU GOT ME
3 (DTS SR)	THE FOUNTAIN
4	BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE MESSENGER
2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Eastwood CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6943 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
2 (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
3 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
4 (DOLBY)	IT'S A BOY THING

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	GHOST RIDER
2 (DTS)	YOU GOT ME
3 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
4	

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	RESERVED
2 (DOLBY)	RESERVED
3 (DTS)	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE PROMISE
2	YOU GOT ME
3 (DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	YOU GOT ME
2	THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY)	BABEL
4 (DTS)	APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	GHOST RIDER
2	PRIMEVAL
3 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1	THE PROMISE
2	YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	TROIKA
2	PLEASE CALL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2	SAPLOT
3	LITTLE CHILDREN
4 (DTS)	THE MESSENGER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
2	RED ROSES
3 (DTS)	THE PROMISE
4	TROIKA
5	THE PROMISE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	CODENAME THE CLEANER
2	GHOST RIDER
3	TROIKA
4	YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	TROIKA
2	THE MESSENGER

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BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

Hathaway to Hanks: Can I hug you?

RUSHES

LOS ANGELES—IT WAS A celebrity mash-up backstage at the Academy Awards as A-list presenters and winners met and mingled in the crowded wings, stage right.

When the show ended, the hallway was jammed with some of the biggest names in Hollywood, including Best Director winner Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg and Jack Nicholson, a star of Scorsese's "The Departed," which also won for Best Picture.

Reese Witherspoon teased the newly bald Nicholson, who shaved his head for a role. "I like your hairdo," she said. "You're bringing sexy back."

Spielberg advised Scorsese to keep an eye on his winner's envelope.

"I lost mine at the Governor's Ball, and we searched for it for 45 minutes," Spielberg said. "We found it, thank goodness."

Encounters between celebrities occurred nonstop throughout the evening.

Tom Hanks met Anne Hathaway. And Naomi Watts bumped into George Clooney, literally, as he left the stage and she prepared to take it.

And where else but the Oscars could you see a line for the bathroom that included Jack Black, Jerry Seinfeld and Robert Downey Jr.?

Greg Kinnear and Steve Carell were backstage when Alan Arkin, their co-star in "Little Miss Sunshine," won the supporting-actor award.

"Wow, congratulations," Kinnear told Arkin.

"I was really moved," Arkin replied.

Kinnear said he and Carell were so nervous they "were about to puke" before the award was announced.

Earlier in the evening, host Ellen DeGeneres stopped young Jaden Christopher Syre Smith to compliment him on his role in the "Pursuit of Happyness" alongside his father, Will Smith.

"If you ever get sick of living with your parents, I'll take you," DeGeneres told him.

Melissa Etheridge, a winner for her song "I Need to Wake Up" from "An Inconvenient Truth," yelled "you're funny" when she passed DeGeneres' dressing room.

"You're funny and pretty and sweet and a singer," DeGeneres replied.

Winners had a chance to use a new Web-based "Thank-You Cam" backstage to avoid reading a lengthy list onstage.

Jennifer Hudson thought about using the camera after she won the Best Supporting Actress award but then couldn't remember who she wanted to thank.

"I can't think right now," she said.

Will Smith passed Hudson backstage.

"You're a pro now," he told her.

Smith also crossed paths with Nicholson, who asked for directions to the stage.

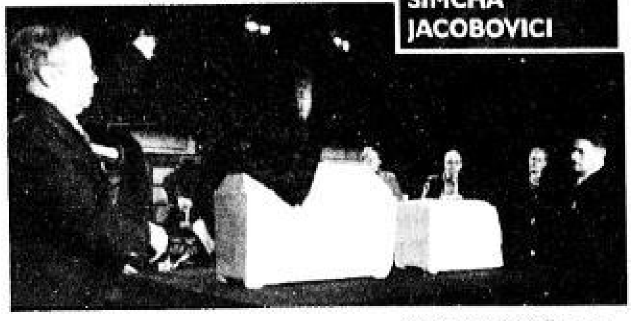
Al Gore was introduced to Seinfeld after "An Inconvenient Truth" won the documentary feature award.

"Man, global warming has to be the hardest way to win an Oscar," the comedian told the former vice president.

Elsewhere, Hathaway approached Hanks and said, "I don't know you, but can I hug you?" *AP*

ANNE HATHAWAY

SIMCHA JACOBOVICI

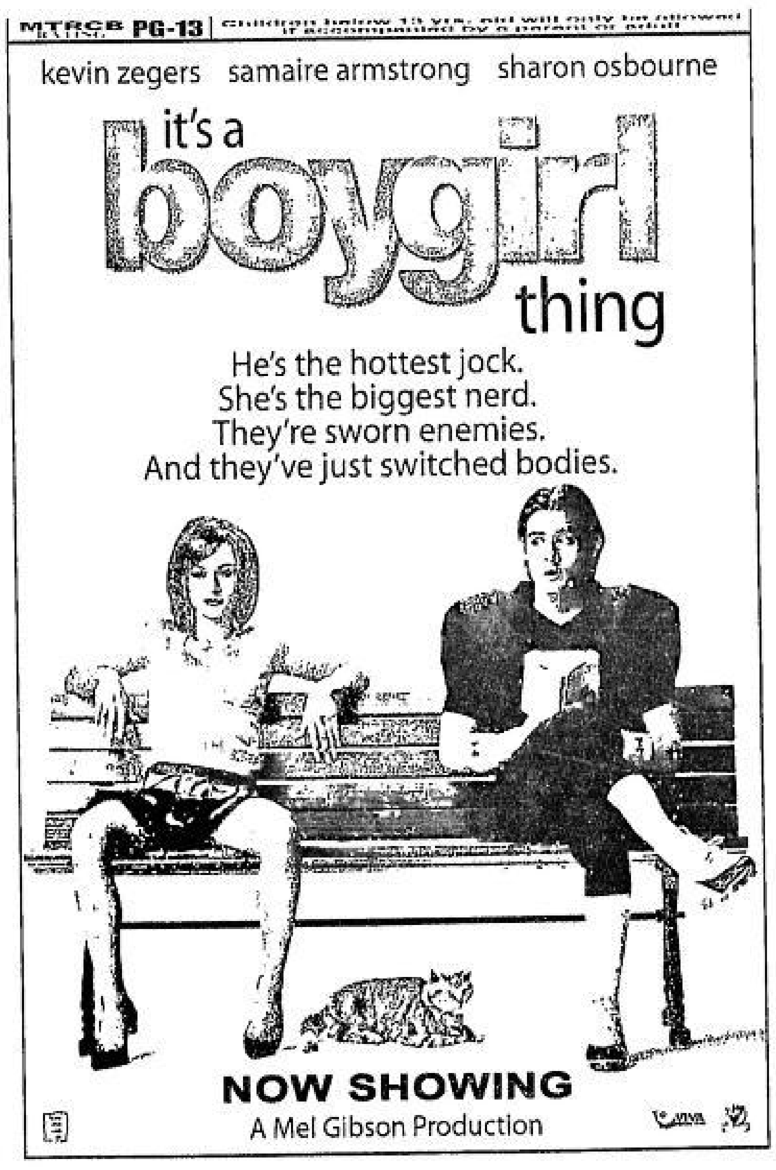


OSSUARIES (bone boxes) believed to be those of Jesus and Mary Magdalene (left) are unveiled. AFP

Jesus 'relics'

NEW YORK—"Titanic" director James Cameron presented on Monday what he said was evidence the tomb of Jesus had been uncovered, but some scholars dismissed it as a publicity stunt. The Oscar-winning filmmaker and a team of scholars showed two stone ossuaries, or bone boxes, that he said might have once contained the bones of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

The findings are the subject of a documentary he produced called "The Lost Tomb of Jesus" and a book "The Jesus Family Tomb." *Reuters*



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He's the hottest jock.
She's the biggest nerd.
They're sworn enemies.
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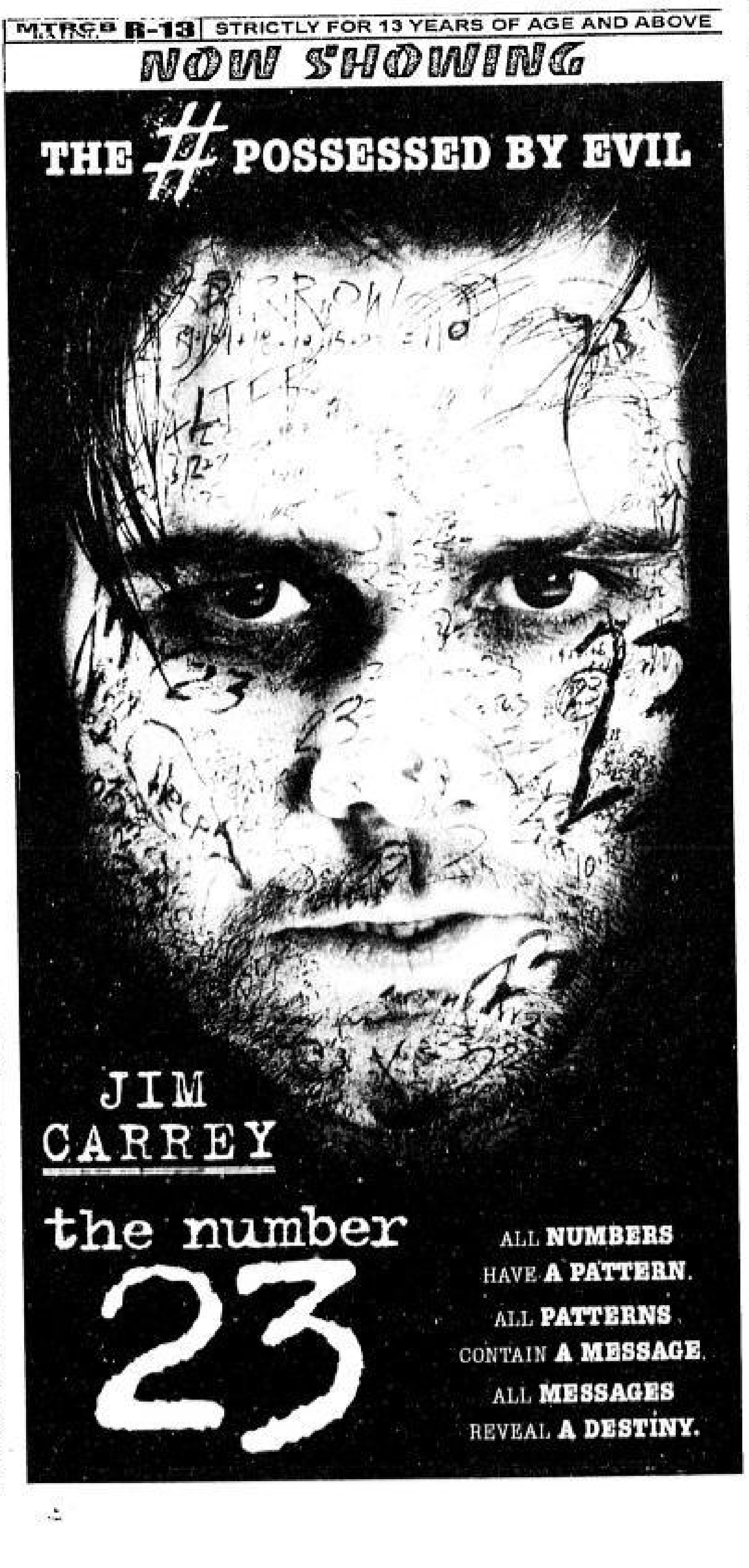

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